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[LEFT FOR DEAD.]

CINDERELLA.

CHAPTER XXVI.

PAULINE, of course, was quite unexpected by her sisters, and her arrival was the last thing they dreamt of.

She left Sophy and her luggage at the Rivers Arms, a clean, old-fashioned inn in the village, and walked up to the house alone.

It was a beautiful August evening; there was hardly a breath of air to stir the leaves in the surrounding plantations, nor a sound to break the almost solemn, melancholy silence, except the tread of her own light feet on the avenue, and the loud cawing of homewards sailing rooks.

Mount Rivers had once more sunk into its former decayed and neglected state.

The short rehabilitation it had had was a mere flicker of the candle. The weeds were higher, and more rampant, and flourishing; the grass longer, the timber more neglected than ever.

Half the windows and more than half of house, as it came in sight, showed blind eyes, as it were—shutters up.

One of the chimneys had been blown down. The bricks and mortar were still lying where they fell. It looked a dreary, doomed kind of place, as if, as Matilda had said, there was a curse resting upon it and its inmates.

As Pauline came nearer, walking now on the grass at the side of the avenue, she overtook a man, pacing slowly before her, with a stick in his hand, his head bent down, also walking on the grass.

As she came quickly up behind him, and he was aware of her presence, he started with an exclamation, and with a face of nervous horror curious to witness.

However, he appeared to be relieved in his mind at the first glance. It was only a woman—a well-dressed young woman.

He recognized her, though she had never beheld him before, and returned his scrutiny as he stood barring her path with a look of cool, contemptuous surprise.

He was a thin, dark, youngish man, with well-out features, and shifty black eyes, whose

whole appearance bore witness to habits of dissipation. His features were swelled and bloated out of their once classic shape. His nose was red, his eyes bloodshot, his hands trembling, his clothes shabby, soiled, and thrown on regardless of appearances.

Pauline surveyed him with amazement as he said, in a thick, hoarse voice, with a slight foreign accent,—

"Who are you? What do you want here?"

"I want to see Madame Villiani and Miss Rivers," she returned, promptly. "Permit me to pass."

"You are their sister, little Pauline, are you not? Lady Curzon, the Russian countess, ha, ha!" with an inharmonious laugh.

"What do you want with them? They never see any one, and they shan't, unless you are bringing them money," as if struck by a sudden happy thought. "Sir Philip is at his old games, I hear," he added, with a leer, bending towards her, with both his hands in his pockets, and peering into her indignant face. "If it's not one, it's another. It's his way. *Toujours, toujours.*"

"Let me pass," said the young lady, with a gesture of her arm, as though she would sweep him aside. "I don't know you, nor wish to know you."

"Oh, the Countess is proud!" making room on the pathway, and letting her proceed, but keeping up with her all the time. "I daresay it will be an agreeable surprise, then, for you to know that I have the honour of presenting myself to you as your brother-in-law."

"What do you mean?" darting a look of scorn out of her dark eyes at her shabby companion.

"You have heard of the Count Villiani?" She could scarcely restrain a little shudder as she gave her head a quick jerk of assent.

"He was said to be dead, but it was not true; he returned, after all—alive, to the arms of his adoring Matilda. I," laying his hand on his heart, and making a deep obeisance, "am Lorenzo Villiani, restored to my enraptured relations."

"What!" exclaimed his listener, in a key of amazed incredulity. "Why, you were said to be drowned. I—I—" stammering—"it is impossible; I don't believe it."

"Who told you that I was drowned?" he asked, pausing suddenly. "Not Matilda, not Carrie?"

"No, but an eye-witness. You are an impostor; you are not Lorenzo Villiani; you are imposing upon those unhappy women—you know you are."

"Ah, you have heard Madame Bert's little story, I see," he said, after a moment's silence. "Madame Bert thinks I became fond of the fishes, and so," with a chuckle of satisfaction, "did he; but I did not draw my first breath among the Greek islands for nothing. I can swim. I can dive like an Arab at Aden. The water was my element; I have no fear of it except," with a laugh at his own wit, "to drink. I disappeared. She told you so much, for her own ends, I suppose, to disgust you with that foolish big Englishman of yours, she told you all? It was convenient for me to be missing. There were circumstances," with the suspicion of a barbarous wink, "that made the situation unpleasant. I had money. I rambled about under another name. I got into another scrape, and finally, like the prodigal, I came home of my own volition," bowing, and removing his shabby hat, "and entirely at your service."

"But it is not known—your return," she stammered, at last. "No one has heard of it."

"No, nor is it to be known beyond ourselves," he answered, with a certain menace in his fiery dark eye. "I am Count Villiani's brother. Please to bear that in mind. His dearest, only, best beloved twin brother," with an ironical smile.

"And why, if you are Lorenzo Villiani, do you hide your identity?"

"For many reasons, most beautiful young lady, reasons that would be riddles to you. I tell you who I really am. It will give you an interest in me," smiling with foolish complaisance; "but in reality it is a dead, dead, dead secret that Lorenzo is alive. Do you see the joke?" complacently.

"I cannot say that I do," very stiffly, and speaking in a frozen tone.

"Another thing—one word more—not a word to Matilda about the little trick I played on Madame Bert" (thus did he humorously allude to his secret, bigamous marriage). "The old woman is as jealous as June. She wouldn't even let me talk to you. She would not let me see you when you were in the house before!"

Did this faded, shabby, bleated-looking man still imagine that he was yet the Adonis who had wooed away many foolish women's hearts in spite of their better reason—who had, they fondly fancied—poor creatures!—that a Greek profile, irresistible dark eyes, and brilliant teeth, must belong only to the best, most chivalrous, honourable, loyal of men, instead of being the

false mask of the most crafty, unscrupulous reprobate who ever whispered sweet nothings into a woman's deluded ear?

"There is one person who must know," said Pauline at last, in a tone of unusual decision.

"Must know!" he echoed. "And who is that, pray?" angrily.

"Philip. He shall know at once! It is cruel to have kept him in the dark!"

"And I tell you," speaking between his teeth, and dropping his guise of civility for one of threatening brutality, "that he shall not know—shall never know! What a fool I was to tell you; but you will be a greater fool if you repeat it! For if you do—" nodding his head, menacingly.

"Keep your threats for those who are afraid of them, Courier Villiani, thief, swindler, forger, cheat, bigamist! I am not the sort of woman you take me for! I shall treat you and your secret how and as I please!" she returned, confronting him with a face of white defiance. "You are in my power; I am not in yours! Please to bear that in mind, Courier Villiani!"

Courier Villiani's face during this speech was truly a sight to see—amazement, horror, doubt, and rage chased each other across his visage in turn, and were swallowed up in the end in a tumult of passion.

He ground his teeth, he stamped the ground, he clenched his fists, as he rolled forth imprecations and denunciations and curses in a foreign—in fact, the modern Greek—language—a language, happily for herself at the present moment, unknown to Pauline.

At last he came to the end of his breath and stopped short, and glaring at his companion with the look of a wild beast, said, as he pointed a shaky, shivering forefinger—

"Go! You will find your sisters in there," indicating the dilapidated mansion them. "I will talk to you again," and abruptly turning on his heel, he plunged into an adjoining shrubbery and disappeared from her sight.

Pauline hurriedly walked on and reached the hall door. It stood open. The paint was all blistered, and had come off in patches; grass was growing up between the steps, the bell was rusty and broken, it would not ring; so she walked straight in and opened the door of the drawing-room.

There was no one there. Then she tried the library—now retaining merely the name, for the books were gone after the plate and spoons; then she recollected a little kind of den or morning room at the back, where they had been wont to sit in their former days of fallen greatness.

She was all right this time; it was occupied, as she turned the door softly and looked in, unperceived at first, for a minute or two. Matilda, now very wrinkled, grey, and withered, and as thin as a lamp-post, sat with her back to the window, pouring out tea from a brown teapot with a broken spout, her whole attention riveted on the article in question, and all her care given to save herself from spilling the precious contents.

There was nothing on the table in the way of eatables but half a loaf. No sugar, no butter, graced this exceedingly frugal meal. Carrie was engaged in renovating an old gown, and it was evidently a task that went much against the grain, for she sighed heavily as she removed some pins from her mouth, and said—

"Dear me, how soon Pauline would have made this into something like! What taste she had; and how fast she worked! I wish I had her here for half-an-hour!"

Her wish was fulfilled on the spot, and she gave a long, shrill, little scream as her half-sister at that very moment walked into the room.

"Here I am, Carrie, you see! How do you do, Matilda?" shaking hands with her petrified elder relative. "I got your letter, and thought I had better come myself."

"Oh, bless me!" ejaculated Matilda. "What

a start you did give us! However, I am very glad to see you. I am glad you came. You will see for yourself how—how we are," pointing to the table with a dramatic gesture, and packing up her face in a way that betokened tears, plenty of tears, and searching nervously for her handkerchief. "I'm sure if anyone ever had a dreadful life I have had it, dissolving as she spoke."

"And he has come home?" said Pauline, seating herself. "So he was not dead, after all?"

"How," with a violent start, "how do you know?"

"I met him in the avenue. He told me. We had a quarrel, Matilda! I do not like him. It is he who has reduced you and Carrie to this!" looking round with significance.

"He has," broke in Carrie, impetuously. "He has drained us of every farthing! He has ruined us! We have not a decent gown to our backs. I've not had a new bonnet for three years. We've had to give up all society—with a sob—" all decency to keep him in drink, cigars, and betting! He bets on the sly—he always loses! He takes every penny from us! We are all but starving! No one outside would believe to what we have been reduced! All by this man—this—" words seemingly failed her, and she burst into tears.

"I am come to help you both," said Pauline, looking from one to the other of her weeping sisters. "I shall provide for you, but not for him. He has squandered the estates, he has reduced you to abject want, he has forged, he has cheated. He must be sent away if I am to do anything for you, Matilda. To give you an income whilst he is with you is like pouring water into sand."—to this Matilda made no reply beyond a low moaning sound in her handkerchief. "And here at least is enough to keep you going," added Pauline, talking out a very well filled portmanteau, which the two ladies regarded with greedy, longing eyes. "I will give this money to you, Carrie, as you are not his wife, and he cannot demand it. Here," handing over a roll of nice crisp notes, "you will find a hundred and fifty pounds, and here are ten sovereigns. I need only keep two or three," emptying the purse as she spoke. "Just what will take me back! I won't trouble you to get me a bed, or put you out in any way. I am staying at the hotel just for the night."

"It was very good of you to come so soon, Pauline," said Matilda, dropping her eyes, and keeping them fixed on the notes her sister was taking up with loving fingers. "This is no place for you to stay in now. That reminds me, I have something for you," rising with sudden activity, and leaving the room with fussy bustle.

"So you and your husband don't get on, I hear, Pauline," said Carrie, still stroking her sister's gift, but unable to repress this glaze. "It was not such a grand love-match on his side as we thought—eh?"

"He loved me when he married me," said Pauline.

"But he doesn't now. Isn't that true?"

"Yes, it is. I'm sorry to say, quite true."

"And whose fault is that, pray?" triumphantly.

"I cannot tell you. I believe it is the fault of his nature. He is changeable, that's all!"

"Changeable! I hear he is the greatest flirt in London; always running after every pretty new face. Always makes a point of being seen walking and driving with the new beauties. Why on earth don't you pay him out in his own coin? I should!" indignantly.

Before Pauline could answer Matilda had joined them with a large paper packet in her hand.

"See, I found this," she exclaimed, breathlessly, "in your mother's little desk long ago! I kept it," colouring guiltily, "and I forgot it. I came across it the other day, and you may be glad to have it."

"Glad—very glad!" returned her sister.

almost snatching from her hands this token from her mother, as it undoubtedly appeared, and repressing a burning desire to tear it open and read it there and then. I shall come up again to-morrow morning, Mattie, and we will settle about business, and your having a large and regular allowance, and all that sort of thing. But now I must be going, for it's getting dark, and I promised Sophy that I would be home for dinner. Good-bye!" kissing each of their withered cheeks voluntarily, for their poverty and misery had touched her not a little, and they were, after all, her own flesh and blood. "Good-bye! Cheer up, Charlie! Brighter days are in store for you both!" and with this parting speech she went quickly out of the house into the deepening even shadows, carrying her precious parcel in her pocket, and wondering ever in her own mind what it could contain. "It's in my mother's writing," she told herself, as she strove for its personal added fitness to her footsteps, "and I did not do my little good action for nothing. See what a reward I have got for coming down to them on the spot of the moment with my spare cash! Probably otherwise I would never have got this," touching her pocket. "Virtue is not always its own reward."

Crash through the bushes to her left, a stunning, sudden, cruel blow on the back of her head. "Virtue was going to be its own reward" after all, if a recompense was needed by a dead woman!

Lorenzo Villaini, of course, had laid in wait and plotted and planned. Providence—his Providence—he declared had sent this insolent impudent, rich young lady into his hands.

She had come alone—mysteriously, in fact. She would never be heard of. They had no people about the place—no servants in the house except a deaf old creature in the kitchen. She had offered too great a temptation to a man who knew no scruples. She was enormously rich. His wife was her next-of-kin. Her husband and she were next door to strangers—a lucky circumstance!

"She would never be missed," he said to himself, with a savage satisfaction, as he dragged her after him into the low under-wood and turned out her pockets—an all but empty purse, a big parcel, a handkerchief—"pooh!" thrusting them back minus the money, with furious exasperation; and half-a-dozen strange cuts. "She is as still as a stone," he said to himself, as he laid his ear to her lips. "It had been easily done. He would be a rich man once more! What a story the thought sent through his brain! And she would never be missed!"

CHAPTER XXVII.

Hour after hour Sophy and Elmer waited for Pauline, but no Pauline appeared, and the former came to the natural conclusion that her mistress had changed her mind, and had decided to remain at Mount Rivers all night. Next morning arrived, but no Lady Curzon; the whole day passed, and still no Lady Curzon.

Sophy felt dull, very dull, indeed, gazing out into the little High-street (over the wire which insured the inmates of the best parlour at the Rivers Arms from the public gaze), but not the least uneasy.

Her mistress was with her sisters, and her last words, her last injunctions, had been—"Stay where you are, Sophy. On no account come up to Mount Rivers until I return."

In her heart she did not wish even Sophy to see the depth of poverty to which her relations had sunk. So Sophy waited on patiently for three whole days.

She knew her mistress's eccentric impulses, and that probably she had been persuaded to remain. But why had she not sent for her, and what was more to the purpose, her clothes?

The maid of Lady Curzon was, of course,

much respected at the inn, and bidden to remain in the privacy of the landlady's own sanctum. The said stout, garrulous landlady had a good gossip in view such as her soul loved.

She would hear, at first-hand, all about Sir Philip's queer way, and whether it was he, or Lady Curzon, that did not "hit it off." She would also hear the full details of the great Russian fortune, whose extent was debated in the village with solemn faces and bated breath; and when Sophy gave a cordial assent to the invitation, Mrs. Larks, the hostess, figuratively smacked her lips in delicious anticipation of a feast of reason and a flow of soul!

But she was doomed to disappointment. Sophy did not lose her tongue, as she would wish, over the hot-buttered cakes and delicate cream-flavoured tea. In fact, it was the other way about.

She, Mrs. Larks, found herself carried away by her guest's ready, appreciative sympathy, attentive manner, and confidential attitude, and was soon discoursing fluently on all the most piquant topics in the neighbourhood, including a bird's-eye view of the county town.

"Things is going to rack and ruin up at the house, as I suppose you know?" said Mrs. Larks, nodding her head solemnly. "Worse than ever. I don't know how it will end, or where!"

"Dear me, Mrs. Larks, you don't mean it; and how does it happen? My lady makes her sisters an allowance, I can assure you."

"Oh, indeed. Do you say so?"—here was one item of intelligence. "But what allowance could stand him? He has ruined 'em! They were poor enough, in all conscience, but since he came, about three years ago, he has just stripped 'em bare as this table!" emphasising the fact with a plump, red hand.

"And who is he, mum?" demanded Sophy, her curiosity not unnaturally aroused. "The Countess is a widow!"

"He says he is Count Villaini's twin-brother; and, goodness knows, he is no credit to him, not that any of us ever saw the Count. We heard he was a vain, handsome, young fellow, with a face like a picture; and that's what took her. He ran through the whole property in a few years. Oh! Hiding her hands and eyes, 'if Mr. Rivers was to come back out of his grave and see it—he that had such a pride out of the place! I give you my word the lawns were like velvet, and in the avenue there was not so much as one leaf to be seen, it was swept that carefully, and now you should just see the place for pure curiosity—it's like a wilderness. You might get a crop of grass off the drive. The chimneys is down, windows broken, pictures sold, plate, furniture, books, everything! Two big cart-loads went out of the place only nine weeks ago—furniture to brokers in London. It's little that's left; and they only keep one old woman in the kitchen, and she wouldn't stay only she would have to go on the parish. For it's little she gets to eat by all accounts!" pausing for breath.

"And what's done with the money, Mrs. Larks?" said Sophy, impressively. "What becomes of the allowances?"

"Don't I tell you, my dear," laying her hand affectionately on Sophy's knee, "that he spends it?"

"And what on? What does he do with it?"

"Well, for one thing, he drinks. My stars, how he drinks! It's brandy; a dozen bottles does no time. He has a bill here and another at the Red Cow as long as the street. He smokes; but that's not half. He bets on races, and goes away for two or three weeks at a time, with all their money in his pocket, and comes back with barely as much as his railway fare. He plays cards, too."

"And why do they stand it, and let him drag all the money from them?" demanded Sophy, with indignation. "He is no more than brother-in-law, and what's that? A nasty, drunken, gambling, spending foreigner!

I'd send him to the right about if I was one of them. I'd let him know he would not live on me!" nodding her head with much decision.

"That may be all very well for you, my dear, talking here quietly with me, but if you saw him, with his red face and his wicked black eyes! He's a bad man, that's what he is, and those two ladies are mortally afraid of him, and just go in fear and trembling, he is that violent, and when he's had a drop, which is most always, he's like a demon. They do say," dropping her voice to a whisper, "as how he knocks 'em about and beats 'em," opening her eyes very wide.

"Mercy on us!—and to think of my lady, being in the house, under the very same roof with such a character! I'll go up to the house this very evening, and see when she's coming away," exclaimed Sophy, with much decision, pushing back her chair as she spoke, and dusting the crumbs from her apron.

"What brought her here at all?" demanded Mrs. Larks, pointedly. "They were none too good to her in old times, by all accounts."

"She came to—to help them, as well as I can make out; to bring them money, and to set them going again," returned Sophy, proud alike of her mistress's wealth and generosity.

"Well, I don't doubt but he will be civil enough and on his best behaviour if that's her errand," said Mrs. Larks, with conviction; "and if you'll be said by me you will bide here till to-morrow afternoon, as you say she told you express not to next or night the house, and maybe she does not like her orders disobeyed. Is she that sort?" significantly.

Sophy frankly admitted that she was, and reluctantly resigned herself to wait, being positively certain to hear from her mistress the following day without fail, she assured herself, but her assurance was vain. No note, no message arrived.

As the morning hours crept slowly, drowsily on, and Sophy's patience ebbed at last, nothing could keep her from Mount Rivers, she declared to her hostess emphatically, as she tied her bonnet strings with a jerk, and set out alone along the dusty highway that led to her destination; her mind was filled with impatience, curiosity, indignation, and a very slight tinge of misgiving, as she walked along between the high dust-powdered hedges at a very brisk pace.

She reached the entrance to Mount Rivers ere long, and pushed back the rusty gate, after some difficulty. It closed behind her with a clang as she commenced to walk up the grass-grown avenue.

"What a place!" she thought, with contemptuous horror, being a young woman of orderly instincts. "What a thicket on either side! what overgrown trees! what a dismal atmosphere of neglect on all sides! and not only of neglect, but of gloom!"

She felt depressed, in spite of herself, as she carefully picked up her dress, and walked quickly on.

Being a person who had strong nerves and not easily dismayed, she fought valiantly against a strong inward reluctance to proceed up this lonely, rank avenue alone.

At last she came in sight of the house, at last she stood upon the grey stone steps, and gave a vigorous tug to the bell (which we know was broken), and no one came to the door.

Sophy had a tolerable stock of patience, and pulled and pealed at the bell, and in vain hammered on the door with her knuckles, irritably at first, and then very imperiously with not merely her knuckles, but a stone.

At last—at last she heard some one coming; slow, shuffling footsteps, approaching through the empty, re-echoing hall, and an old crone, with a face as wrinkled as a roasted apple, and a cap with a portentous frill, and a countenance as sour as vinegar opened two inches of the door, and said very irritably,—

"What's your business?"

"I am come to see Lady Curzon," returned Sophy, with a spark of fire in her eye.

"Lady who?" screamed the crone, with her hand behind her ear.

"My mistress, Lady Curzon," shouted Sophy. "She came here three days ago."

"Don't know anything about her; she is not here," making a movement as if she would slam the door.

"Then where is she?" demanded Sophy, one foot inside the hall.

"How should I know?" insolently.

"But she came here—three days ago—to see her sister and has never come back."

"Don't think it," at the top of her cracked organ; "never came here that I know of. I never see her, and never want to."

"Nonsense!" cried Sophy, out of all patience, pushing herself half way into the hall with a sudden, quick movement, "I tell you she is here, and I will see her. There's some foul play."

"Hoity toity!" screamed the old hag, backing into the hall, and who was by no means as deaf as was believed, but had her own good reasons for affecting to be as non-hearing as a stone. "That's a good joke, surely. Come in, then, and look around you, and make your mind at ease. But it's my opinion as you are mad."

"Mad yourself, you old harridan! Take me to Lady Curzon this moment, or to her sisters, or, I give you my word, I'll go for the police!" retorted Sophy.

"The police!—he, he, he! Go for 'em—run for 'em, if you please. I can't take you to Lady Curzon, 'cause, for good reason, she never came here, and I can't take you to her sisters, 'cause, for good reason, they ain't at home. They went away to London three days ago. What do you say to that, my beauty?"

"And is there no one in the house?" demanded Sophy, looking round, and then seating herself on the foot of the stairs with an air of resolution.

"No one! And if you don't believe me, which would be like your impudence, you can look," nodding her head portentously, folding her arms, and scratching her withered, bare elbows as she spoke.

"Then I just will look," said Sophy, suddenly jumping up and running upstairs at the top of her speed.

She knew the house well, having been there for some time before Pauline's marriage. Door after door she flung open, and displayed nothing but dust and dilapidation or resounding emptiness, and she called "Lady Curzon" at the top of her voice till she was nearly hoarse, but nothing answered her but a faint mocking echo that came out of odd corners and down the wide, winding staircase. Upstairs, at any rate, there was no trace of her mistress, and the house was nearly empty. What did it all mean?

"Well, I hope as your satisfied now?" said the charwoman, sarcastically, as she followed the bewildered Sophy from the empty dining-room to the empty drawing-room. Maybe you'd like to see the kitchen!" derisively.

"I would; and the cellars, and the pantries, and the stables," retorted the other, hotly. "I'll leave no stone unturned till I find my mistress, and that I tell you for a fact!"

"Well, an' you won't find her here. Not an' if you was to pull the house down and leave it in a heap! 'Cause why?—she never came here! This is the kitchen," flinging open the door with a flourish—an immense kitchen with a grand but rusty range, a little stick fire, on which was a kettle, a chair before it, on which reposed a frying pan and two herrings.

"I was just a-going to have my dinner you see, and there ain't enough for two. I'm not a-cooking for the family, you'll perceive, and I'm a-goin' myself to-night."

"Why? Are they not coming back?" asked Sophy,

"Not as I knows on, anyhow," now placing the pan on the fire and turning over the herrings with tender care and an iron fork. I'm not a-coming back. I'd rather go into the house. There ain't no drinkin' and swearin' and brawlin' there, and the food's as good, anyhow!"

"Where are they gone to—the ladies?" persisted Sophy.

"Lauk a-mercy! how can I tell you! They just packed up their things—and precious little they had—in two bags, and sent for me, and told me they was going for a while on important business, and I was to give up the key to Mr. Jones, the sexton, when I'd sorted up the place a bit, and locked the house and barred the windows. Now you have it all pat, my dear," turning a herring as she spoke, "and I hope you're feeling easier in your mind, a-comin' and banging down the front door with a pavin' stone, and a askin' for Lady Curzon, and tearing through the house like a madwoman, and lookin' for what never was here. 'Cause why?—she never came here? Did anyone ever know such games? I hope as your satisfied, miss? I do hope as you are feelin' better and easier in your mind!" with would-be withering irony.

"Mark me, old woman," said Sophy, laying her hand fiercely on that person's shoulder; "if anything has happened to my young lady, I'll see you hanged for it with these two eyes, as sure as my name is Sophia Jane Johnson," and, emphasising this warning with a little push, which caused the frying-pan to oscillate in an alarming manner, Miss Johnson, in a great state of anxiety and mental perturbation, hastily departed from the lower regions, and took her way once more down the avenue at a very hurried walk.

"Easy in her mind!" never in her life had she been less so. Fear added speed to her feet; she arrived back at the Rivers Arms, and into Mrs. Lark's portly, expectant presence nearly running, and breathless, between haste, fear, and excitement.

"Oh! Mrs. Larks," she said, shutting the door loudly after her, and collapsing into a chair, and throwing off her bonnet. "Here's a nice business," she continued, "I went up to that place and did not see a soul. I rang and thundered on the door till my arm ached, and at last an old hag let me in, and she told me my lady had never been there at all—she had never seen her; and, what's more, there was no one in the house but herself—the others had gone away three days ago!"

"Lauk a-mercy on us!" exclaimed Mrs. Larks, staggering back two paces, and seating herself on the sofa, with one fat hand on either knee, and surveying her companion with a countenance of intense curiosity. "Then, Miss Johnson, if your lady is not up at the house, and had never been seen there, it seems to me the question is just this—to put the matter in a nutshell—where is she?"

"Aye, that just is the question, Mrs. Larks," returned Sophy, tragically; "and it's not a question for you and me to look for an answer to—but the police! She came down here with plenty of money in her pocket to do an act of charity unknown to anyone. She goes away from this alone. She falls in with that terrible, desperate man you were speaking of—she is never seen again. It's— it's my belief he has made away with her, and they have all fled the country," concluded Miss Johnson, hysterically.

"There's sense and reason in what you say," rejoined her companion, promptly, her imagination inflamed at once by tragical possibilities, and now in as great a state of mental excitement as the other. "That villain would do anything—anything; and he has got three days' start. Here, George—George!" suddenly calling down into the bar, "come here directly. We (to Sophy) will see what my good man says to it; his head's screwed on the right way, you bet. I feel quite flabbergasted myself."

Her good man was a sharp, wiry little fellow, with a long nose and sandy hair, and recalled

a fox irresistibly to one's mind as he appeared upon the scene with a brisk demand of—

"Well, wife, what's up, now?"

A great deal was up, he soon learnt. Their inmate (that was to have been) was missing this three days, and there was no tale or tidings of her at the house.

"Where was she?" This was a hard nut for him to crack. His little eyes roved craftily round the room, full of unspeakable significance and conjecture.

"The first thing is," he said, springing up, when Sophy came to the end of her impressively told tale, "is to telegraph. We will telegraph to Sir Philip; maybe as she is with him?"

"As much as I am," put in Sophy, scornfully.

"Or she may have gone back to her friend at the seaside. She may be in London, or Paris."

"What! and have forgotten me here. Mr. Larks, excuse me, but your talking a deal of nonsense," exclaimed Miss Johnson, tartly; "we will go across now this instant to the post-office, and then from that we'll go to the police, but it's my opinion that we should see them first; it's them will have to do this business, or my name is not Sophia Jane Johnson!" re-equipping herself hurriedly as she spoke, and preparing for immediate action, despite of Mrs. Lark's entreaties "to stay a moment, dear, just one moment, and have a cup of tea after your walk, and to settle your mind a bit."

No, no! She was deaf to the offer, and already half-way across the street.

The telegrams were sent off there and then. That was an easy matter, but the police were not so readily put in action. It was a drowsy little village—the one constable was away looking up some boys, who were convicted of robbing orchards. "He would not be back before night," so said his wife, with the complacency of one who is dressed in a little brief authority, surveying the excited Sophy and the keen-eyed Mr. Larks, as she stood upon her own doorstep, with maddening *sans froid*.

"What's it for?" she asked, in an offhand, indifferent manner. "Anything particular?"

"I can't say rightly yet," rejoined Mr. Larks, with true but pure caution, "not just quite yet."

"But I can," broke in Sophy, impetuously; "and you can tell your husband when he comes home what I tell you. A young lady has been made away with three days ago, in or about Mount Rivers, and, as I'm a living woman, I tell you that the job he is to be after, and what he has to look out for, is murder!"

CHAPTER XXVIII.

No news—no good news—came either from Sir Philip, from Letty, or from Paris. No one knew anything of Pauline, no one had heard of her; she had mysteriously, completely, and unaccountably disappeared from that day when she had set out to walk alone to Mount Rivers.

She had not even been noticed on the road. One boy admitted that he had seen a tall young lady, with a black parasol, walking very quickly in that direction; but no one saw her enter the gates, and no one saw her return.

The local police rubbed their foreheads, and averred that it was "a queer start, a rum go, as ever they knew." Two detectives came down from Scotland-yard, and were very silent, and looked excessively wise, and as if they knew all about the matter, but did not consider it professional to allude to the topic, which was in every one's mind, the question in every one's mouth—"What had become of Lady Curzon?"

Sir Philip himself speedily arrived and took up his quarters at the "Arms," and had long interviews with police in plain clothes and otherwise; but it all came to nothing. The only trace of the missing lady to be found was her black lace parasol, which was picked

up in the depths of the tangle of a thick, overgrown plantation, and which looked as if it had been hidden; also one or two scraps of thin black material were found stuck on the bushes, as if—horrible idea!—some heavy body had been recently dragged through.

Sophy hysterically recognised these little rags as a portion of the thin black garment her mistress had worn the afternoon she set out for Mount Rivers.

These bits of cashmere and the parasol were all the traces of Lady Curzon that could be discovered, and things certainly looked very black indeed, and the popular voice whispered—nay, did more than whisper—the ugly word "murder."

There was, of course, no inquest, as no body was forthcoming; twelve jurors could not well sit on a fanciful, elegant lace parasol; but people were just as well satisfied in their own minds that Lady Curzon had been "made away with" as if they had seen the draped remains borne past on a shutter, and laid out in the big parlour at the Arms.

Needless to state, Mount Rivers had been ransacked from garret to cellar, and nothing was found—no traces, no papers, no evidence; nothing but quantities of lumber, dust, cobweb, and some old furniture and carpets despised by the brokers as not worth their notice.

Of course the late inmates were carefully looked up, and, contrary to expectation, were found in humble lodgings in London, and interviewed by lawyers, detectives, and Sir Philip himself.

Injured innocence and morose insolence were but feeble and unsufficient terms by which to express the attitude of Matilda Villian and her husband's twin brother. Carrie never appeared on these occasions.

They declared without hesitation they had not seen the missing lady for years. Yes, Matilda actually declared this vehemently, sitting well with her back to the light, the blinds half down, her hands locked tightly in her lap to control their trembling, and speaking with sharp asperity.

The Count went further. He pooh-poohed the notion of robbery and murder as ridiculous gossip got up by the villagers, who were hard, up for a topic. It was far more likely a what-you-call-it plant, a ruse on the part of the lady herself to shake off her identity as Lady Curzon, and go away with someone and enjoy herself and her fortune. The terms on which she and Sir Philip lived were well known. She was young, neglected, lovely; surely—

"Who told you she was lovely?" interrupted the lawyer, sharply—the lawyer who was passing Count Villian under the harrow of a searching examination.

"Her sisters!" with a burst of frankness. "Her sisters, to be sure," returned the keen-witted Greek, who had been keeping himself sober, knowing that to be otherwise at such a critical period meant ruin in every sense of the word. His suggestion did not appeal to his questioner, who was, nevertheless, completely baffled. "Ah, those three days start!" he inwardly ejaculated. "We will have hard work to pull them up. Still less did this amiable idea please Mr. Loraine, who had also done himself the honour of calling on Lady Curzon's relations, and who was keenly interested in learning her fate. As the Count's pleasant view of matters was laid before him with a significant smile he started up, far too fustian to ejaculate a syllable for some seconds, and then he said,—

"If you breathe a word of that kind to me I'll throw you into the street," and he looked quite capable of being as good, if not better, than his word. The Count was cowed, and muttered something incoherent about "a joke." This dark, determined-looking fellow, with his furious temper and sharp lancet-edged questions gave him more uneasiness than all the rest of them put together, except Sophy—she was very keen. "It is a remarkable coincidence," said Mr. Loraine, after a pause, "that you should leave the place the

day she arrived there, and without any hint to anyone previously that you contemplated a move."

"We don't bawl out our plans on the house-tops," replied the ready Count, with a shrug; "and, anyway, her coming and our going was a mere coincidence."

"You left after she came. Some hours after she was seen on the road near Mount Rivers."

"How do you know that?" demanded the Count, with a sneer. "Are you from Scotland-yard? A Saul among the Prophets!"

"No, to your last question. With regard to the other, you walked five miles to Falkland Junction, and travelled up by the night mail, instead of going, as usual, from a station within half-a-mile. True, you always travel by night; but why did you and your wife take such a round on that one occasion? I speak frankly, you see; I don't mince matters," eyeing him sternly.

"You speak frankly, with a vengeance, and, although the business is no affair of yours," savagely, "I'll tell you why we went so far, and on foot—to save money. Since you must know, it made two or three shillings difference in our fares. Now, are you content to know what paupers Lady Curzon has for her nearest relations?"

"At any rate, you are none. The brother-in-law of a step-sister is beyond the pale," rejoined the other, coolly; "and as to two or three shillings—you paid for your tickets in gold."

At this thrust between the joints of his armour the Count recoiled visibly. He turned pale lemon—his nearest approach to white—and stammered,—

"It's false—it's a lie."

"I can prove it," returned Mr. Loraine, keeping his eye steadily fastened on him.

"Prove away," furiously, "I don't care. You'd better mind your own affairs, not mine. Ah! I remember Mr. Oscar Loraine," with a gleam of vindictive fury—"a nice young man about town, the fastest young cornet in the Lancers, well known on the turf and in gambling halls—he has reformed, has he? He takes up cases like a paid detective; he takes particular interest in the disappearance of the pretty wife of his friend, Sir Philip. Don't overdo it; it would be a mistake. It's my opinion that you are running a false trail, my friend, and that she has gone out of the country, and you know where!"

"I told you before I'd half kill you, and now I will," exclaimed Mr. Loraine, springing up and seizing him by the collar; but in deference to Mattie's shrill screams, and not wishing to bring in the police, he threw him from him half across the room with a gesture of disgust. "I'll tell you one thing, you lying, foul-mouthed ruffian," he said, passionately, "that I believe you know where she is, and if there's law in the land, if there's justice in the world, they shall overtake you yet, and so will I," and with these parting words he seized his hat and dashed out of the room, banging the door loudly after him.

"He did it—he did it; I saw it in his eyes! I saw it in that woman's ghastly face, her trembling hands, her attitude; but how can I bring it home to him? How?" he asked himself, in a kind of frenzy of desperation. "And that poor, wretched girl—what an end to what a life! If she does not reappear—and how can she?—that wrinkled, yellow-faced woman, with the furtive eyes, gets all her money. Oh! I see the whole thing as plain as if it had been done before my eyes—she just walked into the lion's den!"

Here he paused, quite overwhelmed at the horrid vision, and going into a chemist's shop sat down for a few minutes, and eagerly drank large draughts of water. The gentleman was ill, evidently; the heat was tropical.

Sir Philip, of course, was concerned, was shocked, was in a kind of way stunned. He did not like such a sensational event happening in his family. If poor Pauline was to die,

how much nicer, and better, and pleasanter for all parties concerned if she had gone off in the small-pox, instead of making this extraordinary exit! He could not tell whether he was a widower or not.

(To be continued.)

A QUEEN WHO WRITES.

Queen Elizabeth of Roumania is one of the most literary ladies of European courts. She writes pleasingly and much—too much, indeed, for her own reputation. Her great theme is woman, her joys and sorrows—especially her sorrows, for she has suffered much. Some of her thoughts are worthy of transcription.

"If a woman is bad," writes the queen, "man is generally the cause thereof."

"Do not trust a man who does not believe in thy happiness in thy home."

About woman the queen writes:—

"Among the savages the wife is an animal of burden, among the Turks a luxury, among Europeans she is both."

"The woman of the world is seldom the wife of her husband."

"An unhappy wife is like a flower exposed to the blast; she remains a bud for a long time, and when she develops to a blossom she quickly withers and fades."

"The virtue of a wife must often be very great, for not unfrequently she must have sufficient for both herself and her husband."

About love Queen Elizabeth writes:—

"If one forgives one loves no longer, for true love knows nothing of forgiveness."

"The jealousy of those who love us is the grandest flattery."

"Man and wife should never cease to do a little courting, no matter how old they may be."

A TAME BUTTERFLY.

One summer I watched the larvæ of the swallow-tailed butterfly through their different stages, and reserved two chrysalides to develop into the perfect insect.

In due time one of these fairy-like creatures came out. I placed it in a small Indian cage made of fine threads of bamboo.

A carpet of soft moss and a vase of flowers in the centre made a pleasant home for my tiny "Psyche."

I found that she greatly enjoyed a repast of honey; when some was placed on a leaf within her reach, she would uncoil her long proboscis and draw up the sweet food with great apparent enjoyment.

She was so tame that it became my habit (says Mr. E. Brightwen, in the *Century*) once or twice a day to take her on my finger, and while I walked in the garden she would take short flights hither and thither, but was always content to mount upon my hand again.

She would come on my finger of her own accord, and, if the day was bright, would remain there as long as I had patience to carry her, with her wings outspread, basking in the sunbeams, which appeared to convey exquisite delight to the delicate little creature.

I never touched her beautiful wings. She never fluttered or showed any wish to escape, but lived three weeks of tranquil life in her tiny home; and then, having, as I suppose, reached the limit of butterfly existence, she quietly ceased to live.

On the day of her death the other butterfly emerged, and lived for the same length of time.

Both were equally tame, but the second appeared to show more intelligence, for she discovered that by folding her wings together she could easily walk between the slender bars of her cage; and, having done so, she would fly to a window and remain there, basking in the sun, folding and unfolding her wings with evident enjoyment, until I presented my finger, when she would immediately step upon it and be carried back to her cage.

A LOVER AND HIS LASS.

CHAPTER XVIII.—(continued).

As I declare to my having seen Colin's face and gives vent to a choking, gasping kind of laugh, which makes one's blood run cold to hear. It is the utter callousness of it in this room of mourning that makes it so horrible—a very spasm of grim hilarity.

"How well it must have been done!" she says, musingly, with those staring, grey eyes fixed on my face—"how completely were you deceived! No suspicion seems to have dimmed your mind for one moment that it was not your lover you saw. I suppose, then, you will not believe me when I tell you that it was not Colin (Boughton you saw, but Michael!"

Can you know what she is saying? It sounds incredible. Not Colin after all—not my own dear Colin; but poor dead, erring Michael! If it could be true! And yet I did, indeed, see him so plainly.

"In your lover's clothes, truly; that was easy enough, for they matched in height; but Michael, for all that," she goes on, still in that level, musing tone, as if she delighted in prolonging the unhappy mystery, and gloated in the unhallowed triumph of post-evil success—fully accomplished.

"Stay a moment, Aunt Rachel," I exclaim, softly. "You tell me it was poor Michael I saw that night. You forget that, though the room was darkened and the light dim, I could not mistake one face for the other. Colin's face was as plain to me then as yours is now. I wish, how I wish, it had not been!" I end, earnestly.

"Yes, it was cleverly done, I own; it might have deceived sharper eyes than yours of that night. It was Leila's handiwork, and I paid her well for it. I gave her fifty pounds—a large sum for a poor woman to give; but I would have given three or four times that sum if it had been necessary; and within my power to give, for Michael's sake. What were a few pounds to my compared to his lifelong happiness; and now he lies there, pulseless, sightless, dead, and I am left alone," she moans, laying her head for one moment against the coffin lid.

The next it is erect once more, and she goes on, all trace of softness vanished.

"Yes, I paid her well for her work, and she deserved it. I do not grudge her well-earned money. I would do the same again if needful, and never count the cost. It nearly prospered. Everything was going on so well; just as I wished—the future secure for him, with you as his wife. I should have lived to see my own master of Gable End, head of the house, a Lascelles of Marling. I had served my time for that; it was coming at that, then Nemesis came and swept away all my labour, making it empty, void, of no account, lost for ever. Why should I tell you all this? Why reveal all my hidden thoughts, hopes, and labours? Because I feel impelled by some unseen power—I feel as if Michael's spirit hovered near, and made my tongue speak. Hush! what is that?" and she looked fearfully round the dusky room, pressing her hand to her head; as if in pain.

It was nothing but the sighing of the trees in the autumn wind outside, and she goes on the next moment.

"Have patience a little longer, for I have nearly finished now. At least I feel that I am doing what Michael wishes; that alone keeps me up, and gives me strength for my task. Before he is put away for ever you shall hear all. I will not spare myself; I have nothing to lose, nothing to gain, nothing now to live for. Let all your wealth fall on me, brother Lascelles; say, do what you will. Reap what revenge you please; it cannot hurt me, I am outside the pale of all feeling."

"Rachel, it is not for us to speak of revenge," puts in Esther, sternly; "by your own showing you are a miserably guilty woman, punished by Heaven. It is not for us to anticipate the

justness of its wrath for your sin. Not content with doing evil yourself you dragged others into the meshes of guilt with you—you confess it."

"If you mean Leila," she says, with a frightful gasping laugh, "she needed very little encouragement, I can assure you. She turned her talents to account, that was all. It was the first time her hands had ever earned their own living, she said with genuine pleasure, and told me she wished she could often earn fifty pounds so easily. When she wrote to me last she said no money had ever given her so much enjoyment as that fifty pounds. I have her handiwork looked safely away from prying eyes; I give it to Colin as a relic to do with as she pleases. She shall have it now; it will add point and interest to my confession; it will clear up all mystery henceforth, and doubt will be buried with my dead son to-morrow."

All this time she has been detaching a key from a thick steel ring in her hand. She now goes to an oak cupboard in the wall, and takes out a square iron box, about a foot square, places it on the table near the window, and puts the key in the lock.

"Open it, Colin," she cries, imperatively—"open it, and see the gift I offer you. It is yours now. It cost me fifty pounds, remember—Leila's handiwork—art and nature in one mould. A valuable present for a poor woman like myself to make, is it not? But I give it you freely as a charming souvenir. I meant to keep it by me to look at from time to time; but it would be useless to me now; while to you it will be more eloquent than anything I could say. You will understand everything when you see it; it will witness the truth of what I tell you. A valuable gift, truly. Open and look at it."

I turn the key, and raise the lid, father and aunt standing close, watching me. A linen handkerchief covers what is beneath, and hides it as yet from our sight. I lift the handkerchief away, and take out a waxen mask! It is Colin's face modelled in a fine, thin sheet of wax—a perfect resemblance.

This is what worked all my woe, parted my lover and I. Aunt spoke truly when she said it would explain all! The mystery is one no more. How cruel, how horrible of them.

"That is what you saw—a wax effigy of your lover's face. Is it not perfect—a work of art?" aunt's voice breaks in, speaking thickly, and she sways to and fro unsteadily, her hand on her breast. "Leila worked it from an old photograph she had of him; I watched her do it. Clever, so clever, and it cost her fifty pounds. Put it away!" she almost screams the next moment, and her face becomes distorted with emotion; "Hide it out of sight, lock it away, I cannot bear to look at it, lying there. It's a living, breathing face, cursing me, mocking me in my impotence to keep my child with me. Put it out of my sight, hide it from me; it kills me; chokes me; burns up my breath. Take it away!" with frightful energy.

Stretching out her hands she seizes it from the edge of the table where I had laid it down again, for I could not hold the horrible thing so fraught with sorrow and pain, catches it in both palms, raises it thus above her head, and dashes it with all her trembling passionate force on the polished oak floor at our feet. It lies shivered in a thousand atoms.

Then with one fearful, gasping scream, that echoes through the room of mourning, and rolls away in the grotesque beams above in the ceiling, her face puckered up in deep livid lines, she falls heavily across the crushed remnants of her sin in a grey huddled-up mass; inert, senseless, stricken in that one moment by that most awful of living deaths—paralysis. It needs not father's words to tell me what it is, as we try to raise her from the floor; it is like holding an iron body, the muscles powerless, the brain clotted, the mind wandering in darkness, the face drawn out of all likeness to its former self.

And I see the awful change before me, the

terrible metamorphosis of stricken humanity. I feel how true it is that "Vengeance is mine, I will repay!" How just that vengeance should be taken out of our earth-born, earth-born, grovelling race, and directed by a higher power than ours, than we poor ones, born of Mother Earth, can foresee.

CHAPTER XIX.

"It was a lover and his lass; with a highboy, and a high-servine;

That o'er the green cornfield did pass; in the spring time, the only pretty ring time; When the birds do sing, height, dighting, dighting, sweet lovers love the spring."

So the last act in my life's play is one of tragedy.

When I look back upon the last few months, and note the many changes, the shifting scenes, the entrances, exits, calms, storms, lulls, sorrow and sin, I can but acknowledge that this world is a huge masquerade, and we the masquers—all of us. We toil, mull, laugh, weep, sing, sigh, and fret our puny souls on the stage of the world, but poor players at our best. The year has fled, it will come back no more. It has joined the past, and this has begun his rapturing again.

In Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, Rosalind ends her epilogue with "When I shall make courtesy, bid me farewell." So, as I shall soon be bidding you adieu, I'll begin and make my courtesy now, for I wish you to think well of me ere I go.

I have but small matter left to tell you of, while I make my bow in public. Gable End stands where it did, and dear old Pate still occupies her baked batter sofa, and puts me to bed at night. Marling has not moved in any one way or the other, though winter is gone, and beautiful spring comes smiling at us.

Aunt Rachel has never recovered from her stroke of paralysis. Brain, mind and body have suffered. She lies a bedridden, helpless wreck, in a tiny cottage built at the side of the Marling graveyard, where, in her olden days of reason, she can see Michael's grave. That is her wish, the only thing she can make her desire for. A nurse attends her, and father sees she has every possible comfort and needful luxury. What a life's end! Poor, poor Aunt Rachel!

Father wrote a letter to Leila, demanding her confession of complicity in the horrible plot against me, which had succeeded so completely in parting Colin and I, and had done such malice in its planning.

She wrote him back as insolent reply.

"Sir,—I am at a loss to understand the extraordinary communication you have been pleased to write me. Your demand to me to confess what I know nothing about seems to me simply grotesque. I can only imagine that Aunt Lascelles is raving mad, and that the loss of Michael by such a death, which I regret to learn from you, has affected her brain. Otherwise I can hazard no excuse. You speak of a wax mask; I have not the remotest knowledge what you mean. Colin never liked me, and is no doubt, glad to get hold of anything against me to wreak his spite. You can tell her that I would not have soiled my hands by making a mask of her treacherous lover. Also that I am going to be married to a man who has heaps of money, and any more letters about any such rubbish I shall show him, and make him bring an action for libel. You seem to be all a mass of mad people together. Understand that I deny everything you say. You needn't write any more, because I shall not trouble to answer your letters. You can make what use you please of this."

A pretty little epistle, was it not? If we had imagined to glean any details and further solve the weird mystery we were to be disappointed. I think we both hoped to find a repentant Leila, sorry for what she had done, and anxious to amend her sin in the best way

she could; but we found her hard, defiant, reckless, and unamused to the last. That she had made that waxen mask, as Aunt solemnly declared, that it was made for a distinct and subtle purpose, we never doubted for one moment. It was impossible to doubt. Besides, her very defiant hardihood confessed her guilt; but we had no remedy, no witnesses to prove it, and she trusted on the knowledge of this fact.

The mask itself was nothing but a shapeless multitude of flakes and splinters, Aunt a helpless invalid, with mind almost gone, and Michael lay under the earth, mute as the grave wherein he rested.

Only Leila of that trio remained, and she kept her secret.

That she was going to be married we heard afterwards to be a fact. The man was rich, only, how was also seventy, and had been a sportsman in Drury-lane. Leila would be a rich widow while still young. This was the goal of her longing. Well, may she enjoy what she has earned.

Many a time and oft have I longed to ask Miss Hannah if she ever heard anything of Colin. It has been on my tongue and a score of times, and never uttered. She has never breathed his name once. It has been a sealed subject between us ever since I broke our betrothal. And how I used to rave on to her about him in that sweet time when our love was fresh, sweet, and unclouded. Ah! I was young and foolish then.

At last, however, I did manage to timidly hear the longed-for question in our twilight, for I not only yearned to hear if he was well—but yes! I was happy, but also to learn what I could about Daryl, and if the disgrace which Colin feared so terribly had already fallen upon the name of Boughton or not. So I very timidly said, encouraged by the grey twilight—

"Do you ever hear of—of—of Colin Boughton, Miss Hannah?"

"Yes, dear, I do sometimes. I heard something about him only last month," she returned, quietly, as if answering an ordinary question.

"What was it, do you mind telling me?" I asked, thinking far sure she must mean about Daryl's affair, and nerving myself to hear the worst.

"No, my child, not in the least if you wish to hear it. I heard that Colin Boughton is a very rich man. He has come into an immense fortune by the death of his godfather, an old bachelor, who has left him everything he possessed."

"I am so glad, very, very glad. Poor, dear Colin!" I sighed softly to myself, as I heard this welcome news, forgetting in that moment that alas! he was nothing to me now, and that my speech must sound odd to Miss Hannah.

But I was overjoyed for his sake that the wealth had come to spare him and his the dishonour he had so dreaded.

"Colin, my child, are you sure you did right in sending your lover away?" she asked me, presently. "Do you never regret what may have been done in haste and with too much haste? Are you sure you did wisely?" with a world of meaning in her kindly voice.

"Miss Hannah, indeed I thought so then. I was sure of it then; now I know that I did wrongly. Since then I have found out that I misjudged him; suspected him of a deed which he never did; never dreamt of, which he denied me when I accused him; and I told him he was speaking falsely. But it was not my fault, believe that I beg of you." I ended, most earnestly.

"My dear," she said, taking my hand in hers, "I believe your story as you thought right; but it was a pity, a great, lasting pity."

Then, moved by what I cannot tell you, there in the gathering dusk, my hand in hers, I sorrowfully revealed the whole sad history, which I have told to you. I told it simply, quietly, keeping nothing back from her. When I had quite finished she spoke.

"Oh! my child, my dear little Colin! how you must have suffered!" she said, shaking her sweet, old, blanched head in keenest sympathy. "It was a terrible trial for you. I wonder you bore it as bravely as you did."

"Yes, it was very bitter. The course of my true love did not run smoothly, it is very certain. But it is over now. I am reconciled to fate, dear Miss Hannah. If I am only half as nice an old maid as you are I shall be very well content with myself, I assure you," and I kissed her.

"Ah! my dear, do not talk like that. My spring and summer time have passed away from me for ever. Your spring may be going, gone even, but your summer is coming to you. May it be an Indian summer, full of bliss, and last you life."

When I went home, I unlocked that little secret drawer in my dressing-case—the first and only time for months—and took out my silver sixpence. I had never had the heart to look at it before; now I really felt intense pleasure in seeing it, dear little silver face again. It is true it waited back sad memories, but they had lost their aching bitterness, and left but a tender melancholy, which is almost akin to pleasure.

Miss Hannah spoke truly when she said my spring had gone. Ah! fact twenty? Twenty whole years, leaving my teens behind me! But I would fain think with her that my summer was coming—a summer of joy and happiness. You see, Love flew in a way window. I didn't ask him, but he came; and he made his home for a little time in my heart. So, when he flew away, he left a desolate void, which has never filled. Where Love has once been is sacred to his memory alone. At least, it is so with me.

It must be nearly a month after our talk, and the easing of my heavy burden in Miss Hannah's sympathizing ears; when one early afternoon she sends over a little note to me, running thus—

"My dear little Colin, come to the Rectory this afternoon, I have something to show you. As present from me, with my love; I think you'll like it; be sure and come.—Your loving
"MISS HANNAH."

So half-an-hour later finds me wending my way along the shady Maresfield lanes.

I find Miss Hannah looking out for me at the Rectory garden gate.

"That's right, my child, I was sure you would come. I've been waiting here for you. We won't go indoors and talk, it's such a lovely afternoon. I've had a nice seat put up in the garden-orchard where the sun is, and I want you to tell me what you think of it. That isn't my present I spoke of; I'll fetch that out directly, if you'll wait in the orchard. I'll come to you there, and bring my gift with me."

She trots away from me towards the house, and I, as a matter of course, saunter to the old walnut tree, where the swing hangs that always reminds me of Colin. I sit in the swing, my feet touching the ground, and swing myself to and fro thoughtfully while I wait for Miss Hannah and the present she is going to give me.

The west wind sways the walnut boughs, making them rustle together as if they sang a whispering chorus. Spring is on the march, summer is coming once more, the very air sings it.

Yes! and my heart cries it beatingly, throbbingly, with fierce exultation; for, with a start, making my meditations fly away, I turn and see Colin! My dear love Colin!

"Blue Eyes!" he begins softly, stretching out his hands to mine: "Shall we be friends?"

Surely my face says yes! for I feel his arms round me close, but my lips are dumb—if they could speak they would cry "summer has come." Oh! the bliss of it to have him near once more—to know that in the future we shall always be together; no more parting now. I cry, laugh, sob all in one breath.

Presently Miss Hannah's voice steals pleasantly on our ears.

"You like my present, I see, Colin!" she says, smiling, her dear eyes brimful of glad tearfulness.

"Your present?" I echo, rather bewilderedly glancing round, for truth to tell I had clean forgotten about any present until this moment.

"Yes; this big man present. I thought, it such a pity you two should not be happy for want of a little help; so I wrote to Colin, and I told him you had changed your mind about being an old maid. I didn't tell him exactly in those words," she explains, careful to make me understand that my lover knows all the sad history; "but I made it clear that he might come down and see if you would be friends with him; and here he is."

What can I do more than kiss her my thanks? Words could not express a tithe of the deep gratitude I feel for her goodness. Colin, too, takes her wrinkled hand in his and raises it to his lips—a young man's homage to a beautiful old age.

Then she leaves us.

"Blue Eyes!" says my lover, as we stand heart to heart once more, "have you got that sixpence still?"

"Brown Eyes, I have," is my answer.

So now I make my courtesy, bid him farewell.

[THE END.]

A HARMLESS that is quite undisturbed becomes tiresome; we must have ups and downs; the difficulties which are mingled with love awaken passion and increase pleasure.

AN OLD MAID.—Nearly all girls, deny it though they may, have a horror of becoming an old maid. As I am a girl it strikes me that I ought to know as much about this as anybody else, and certainly more than a man. In the first place, the average girl is taught from her earliest infancy to look upon an old maid as a most miserable and unfortunate being, who has made a great mistake in not marrying some man. "Even if she had married unhappily it would have been better than this lonely life," is what all the world seems to say of the spinster. If she happens to be unattractive she is spoken of as "Poor Miss Jane; she is so good but so uninteresting—of course nobody asked her to marry, no one would wish to be tied to such a companion." So a girl hears maiden ladies of an uncertain age pityingly and contemptuously spoken of, and she says to herself: "Be an old maid? Why, I cannot imagine a more undesirable fate. I would marry any man rather than be spoken of as 'That old Miss Smith, who is so anxious to make herself attractive.'"

ON WATERING FLOWERS.—Watering in gardens requires different rules from watering pot plants, though both need thought, and must vary with the time of year and weather. If in a very smoky town I should recommend more frequent watering than in the country, in dry weather. In the country the water is only wanted for the roots of the plants, but in the city it is wanted by the leaves, too, or the foliage gets choked and poisoned by the smoke. Plants breathe through their leaves, as we do through our mouths, so it is necessary to the lives of some, and to the health of all, that their leaves should be kept clean. Otherwise, in watering your garden, you should try to imitate nature. Do not water your garden in a hot sun; it makes the foliage shrivel and colour. Nature takes care about this, for when rain falls the sun is hidden by clouds. So in hot weather do your watering very early, or else in the evening, unless your garden is shady, and then any time will do. You should water as seldom as possible, except when the foliage needs washing, and then you should be careful to soak the roots thoroughly before any water touches the leaves.

MIRIAM'S BIRTHDAY GIFT.

MIRIAM stitched away night and day at red shirts, and blue and white shirts, and grey. They were the spells and talismans that kept her all the bright hours of the brightest days, as well as all the dark hours of the darkest ones, in the corner of the window of her dingy little room.

It was not a dirty room; she kept it clean, but a mean, yellow paper, and mean, yellow doors, and a ceiling painted pale brown, and a felt carpet, and second-hand furniture, will look dingy; and tasteful rooms, with flowers, and birds, and pretty bits of lace curtain, and all that, cannot be kept up by an honest young woman who lives by making flannel shirts, and has a little sister to care for also.

To be sure, Dollie was the joy of Miriam's life—the one thing she had left to love. Once they had been so happy.

Their father, a merry, black-eyed sea-captain, had kept a home for them in a sweet country place. Their mother, bright cheeked and curly-haired, had been like an elder sister to Miriam. Oh, what merry times they had had! But the dear father's ship went down one dreadful night, and when the news came his wife only lived long enough to kiss the little dead baby they put into her arms, and Miriam, at eighteen, and Dollie, at eight, were left alone in the world.

The house was sold. The orphans were not too well dealt with. There were debts to be paid; and though one or two kind captains made up a purse for the little girls, they had families themselves, were not rich, and were men who were always on the wing.

Still, there was enough to live on for a year, and Jack bade Miriam be of good cheer.

Jack was engaged to Miriam. This voyage ended, he would be first mate, and then, if she would marry him, there would always be a home for Dollie. Miriam would have married Jack if he had had no chance of promotion, and terrible as was her grief, his love kept her heart from breaking.

But the clouds were gathering darker and darker about her young life.

Jack sailed away one day, kissing her before he went with long, lingering kisses, and bidding her think only of his return.

And, alas! that happened which happens now and then on the great ocean—the vessel was not heard of again? It was never spoken; it did not arrive in port; no vestige of its existence was ever washed ashore where men who understood such things could find it. No figure-head, no streamer marked with a name, no bottle in which some bit of hurried writing told its fate.

After awhile old sailors knew nothing ever would be heard of the ship, and they told Miriam, whose heart still clung to hope.

And now three years were gone, and Miriam stitched at the flannel shirts in her city room, and Dollie grew up thin and quiet and eager-eyed, wondering at fate, and always looking back on merry Christmas days and midsummer holidays, and papa's home-coming, and the curly-haired mother who laughed so much, and Miriam, with dimples in her cheeks, walking with Jack in the moonlight, and at herself, a rosy child, with store of dolls and sugar plums and pretty pink and blue dresses, and kisses innumerable, and she the pet of the household, as though she were someone else.

Yet Miriam loved her, and she always found herself in her arms when she awoke in the morning.

Only Miriam was sad and poor, and there seemed nothing bright in life.

On her eleventh birthday, to be sure, she had a surprise, a beautiful book, with gilt covers and gay pictures.

She did not guess how much nightwork Miriam had done to earn it, and how she was hard at work thinking, thinking, thinking

what she should do that she might give Miriam a present on her birthday.

Miriam would be twenty-one on the third of May.

To do this, Dollie knew she must earn some money. She could now sew well enough, and though she was industrious and did all the housework, and bought the provisions and cooked them, and helped carry home the bundles, that made no money.

When Dollie went to the baker's for bread, or to the butcher's for, say, a neck of mutton or some sausages, or to the grocer's where coffee was—so the circulars said—cheaper than it was anywhere else, she thought of this constantly. She asked the prices of pretty things in the shops, of collars and cuffs, of neck-ties, of books, of jewellery of the cheaper sort found in trimming shops. Things seemed very dear to Dollie, but one who only hoped might as well hope for sovereigns as for shillings.

And sometimes Dollie lying alone in bed before Miriam finished her work and came also to rest her pretty weary head on the coarse pillow-case, would wish that there were fairies like the fairies in her book who came at night to put shillings into good children's shoes. At least the very day before Miriam's birthday it seemed to Dollie that this happened. Dollie had a hole in her shoe, right in the sole, close to the edge where it was fastened to the upper. It let in the water in rainy weather. It was a trap for pebbles and splinters, so that Dollie was often compelled to hop on one foot to a doorstep and take the intruder out. And one day, when she had been buying a mince pie, not for dessert but for dinner, something slipped in that hurt her a good deal, and that seemed to her like a button. "But if it is a button," thought Dollie, "I'll keep it. Buttons are useful."

She set her little basket down, and held on by the area railing, and ran her finger into her shoe, and into her palm dropped a small, shining silver thing—sixpence—really a sixpence. Now, a sixpence is not a large sum; but when attained miraculously at the moment when one had ceased to hope for anything, it might seem so at Dollie's age.

Some vague idea that fairies really were around actually thrilled the child. Then the substantial fact fixed itself in her mind.

A present of some sort Miriam should have. She could give it to her.

Dollie hid the treasure in the corner of her pocket-handkerchief, took home the pie and kept her secret as she ate the pie with her coffee.

Then, when all was tidy, away she went, stealing out of the house with great importance, and staring at the shops and pricing things, and finding nothing that was worth buying.

At last, in a small sweetstuff-shop window, she saw some little pincushions—two scallop shells set over a bit of coloured satin, with a loop of ribbon to fasten to one's belt, or a nail.

They might do, she thought.

Alas! they were a shilling apiece.

But the half-grown girl behind the counter was good-natured.

"Look here," she whispered to Dollie, "I know how hard it is to get things when you're young and aren't earning yet. She charges a shilling for these, but she buys 'em of an old sailor, who makes them himself for sixpence. You go down this street along the wharf to a little yellow house. There's toy boats in the window, and parrots, and he's an old man with a wooden leg; and just ask him. He'll sell you one."

"It's very kind of you to tell me," said Dollie; and with a grateful look she sped away; and though Miriam would have expected to see her killed outright did get safely through the crowds of vehicles to the yellow house, where the little old man with the wooden leg kept his queer shop, and, as the sign over the door declared, "Apartments" also.

Lame sailors smoked on the steps. One whittled at the end of the work-room.

As Dollie stood modestly waiting, a tall man, with a long beard, who looked thin and ill and very sad, hurried past her, and went upstairs. It was then that the old man asked her what she wanted.

"One of them cushions?" he repeated. "Well, my dear, yes. By the dozen is my rule, but I breaks rules for pretty little lassies like you. Will you have a blue, a pink, or a yellor silk? Make up your mind, and I'll pitch down what you choose. My darter tries the silk, I gums the shells on and polishes 'em, and so they're finished. She's at work up stairs now. So which?"

"Blue, please," said Dollie; and away stamped the old man. When he came down he showed her the cushion, took the silver, and went to hunt up a bit of paper to wrap it in; and the whittling sailor spoke to him.

"That poor chap looked blue," he said.

"He is blue," said the old sailor. "All that's come and gone is nothing to this," he said. "He hoped ag'in hope until now. But, you see, he's looked for his gal a month now, and can't find her; and he says either she's dead or married, and he's talking of putting a pistol to his head. I never see a chap so mortal down in the mouth afore."

"Folks has lived through it and married other gals," said the sailor, whittling hard and turning very red.

"Yes," said the old man, "but don't you see he's had three years on a desert island, and seen two men along of him die, one arter the other, and was at starvation's door when Captain Brown picked him up, that weak he couldn't stand. And now this worry. Sartinly can be borne better than unsartinty, be it ever so woeful. Here, little lassie!"

But Dollie, with eyes and mouth wide open, did not even see the little package he held out to her. A memory of a nose and of hair like those of the tall man she had seen burnt upon her. Jack had no beard, but—oh—but oh—she was strong in childish hope, and that childish expectation of fine endings to real life stories which we lose in after-life. Miriam would have sighed and gone away, but Dollie clutched the old man's jacket with her thin little hands.

"Oh, please sir," she said—"oh, I believe it's Jack. I always knew he wasn't drowned. Oh, please tell him that if he's Jack I'm Dollie, and Miriam is my sister. Oh, tell him, I think it's Jack, and that it is Miriam he is looking for. We're Captain Wilson's daughters—tell him—tell him!"

"Good heavens!" shouted the whittling sailor, dropping his knife. "It's like a play. The fellow is looking for Capten Wilson's darter."

Up he went, five stairs at a time. Down he came with the man with the beard.

"Where is she? Where is she?" he gasped. "This—this isn't Dollie?"

"This isn't Jack. Oh! dear, dear!" cried Dollie. "Only your nose—that looks like—oh! is it Jack Ferrers?"

"Where is Miriam?" was all he answered. And the whittling sailor wiped his eyes with a big red handkerchief, and the old man yelled "Huray!"

Then he crammed the pretty cushion into the child's pocket, and she went away with her hand in the thin, brown hand of Jack's, and told him all as they hastened along.

"Go up and prepare her, Dollie," said Jack. "This is sudden. It might hurt her."

So Dollie climbed the stairs, thinking what she might say, and she came where Miriam sat at work and said,—

"Miriam, I wanted to give you a birthday present, and the fairies put sixpence into the hole in my shoe, and I went to buy a pincushion; but I've got a bigger present than that. Guess what it is? It's—it's—Jack—"

"The child is delicious!" cried Miriam. "Oh, Dollie, Dollie—my little Dollie!"

"Oh, Miriam," said Dollie, "I'm only preparing you. Jack has come back. He's down—"

stairs." But Jack was upstairs by that time, and, for my part, I think that joy, however sudden, seldom kills.

"Oh, what a wonderful birthday present you brought me," cooed Miriam, kissing her sister next morning. "Oh, my pet, we shall all be so happy together."

And so they were.

M. K. D.

HOW I FOUND MY WIFE.

LATE in the summer of '62, while seated in my rooms in the city, I received a very urgent letter. It was from an old chum, and the contents were as follows:—

"B—, Aug. 25th, '62.

"DEAR CHARLEY,—I'm in a fix, as you will see when I explain, and furthermore you are the man of all others to help me. The most attractive part of my menagerie is delayed, and the people are gradually falling off in their attendance, all on account of the illness of my lion-tamer, who was taken ill a few miles from here. Since then the cages of the lions have not been entered, as I have not been able to find a man that will enter them and 'show up the animals.' So you see, unless something is done, my show is in danger of going to destruction. Now, what I want to come at is this. I am, of course, aware of your old habits, and of your occupation in days of yore; and now, if you still have your old power over the animals, will you, to oblige your old chum and save his business perhaps from ruin, come to this place and take charge of matters for a few weeks at least, until my man recovers. Your expenses will, of course, be defrayed, and your pay be forthcoming. Telegraph your answer to this place immediately.—Your friend as ever,

"DICK BENSON."

A few words of explanation are needed.

Dick and myself had been school and college chums, and our tastes had run in the same channel, viz., upon animals; and I, during the spare moments in my college course, had devoted myself to hard study upon their manners, habits, etc., especially those of the lion, and to the manner of taming this animal, so that within a year or so after leaving college I had become a skilful lion-tamer, and had engaged in the business, but was not following it at the time of which I write.

My friend, with the aid of a small capital, had engaged in the menagerie business, and in time had become a rich man, although he still carried on the business, as the letter shows.

The question now arose, should I go? This I was not long in deciding, for, besides my remembrance of "auld lang syne," and my natural desire to help my friend, I had become tired of the humdrum city life, and was longing for something exciting. I at once telegraphed my answer, and started by the next train.

Many times since have I thanked my stars for this decision, as it was the means of obtaining for me one of the best of wives, as the sequel will show.

A few days later I reached the place they were at, and in the course of half-an-hour thereafter was warmly shaking hands with my old chum, whom I had not seen for several years.

He soon made me acquainted with all parts of his exhibition. The lions, which I was to manage, were shown to me, and in a few days I had them under subjection, showing that I had not forgotten my former occupation. And so my friend's exhibition went on, and was again in a prosperous condition.

We were getting along finely together, and I had been with the exhibition three or four days, and we had left the place and taken up our line of march for S—, where we were intending to remain a week or so, as it was a town of considerable importance.

We were travelling till late, one summer evening, on the road to this place, and long

before we reached it the animals began to get restless, the cause being that for a day and a-half we had not been able to obtain their usual allowance of fresh meat. We learned that the drovers had been through that unfrequented part of the country, buying up stock, and nothing remained except a few choice animals, with which the owners would not part for love or money, and I confess I had become a little alarmed in regard to my lions, and my alarm was increased when, on reaching S—, we found the same state of affairs there.

The tent was raised, however, on the following day, and preparations made for an exhibition.

In the afternoon we had a partial exhibition, and all this time the animals were growing more and more uneasy, and my efforts to quiet them not being very successful, I already began to have some doubts as to the propriety of entering the cages.

A few spectators came in during the afternoon and were engaged in viewing the animals.

The show was almost over, and a few persons only remained within the tent, and I and a few of the employés of the show were standing on one side, conversing on the danger of entering the cages, which I would be required to do in the evening, when suddenly our attention was attracted by a shriek loud and prolonged, coming from the other side near the cages of the lions.

Turning quickly, I saw a sight which filled me with horror.

One of the largest male lions was just in the act of drawing a little boy into the cage through the ventilator at the bottom. I took in the whole tableau at once—the crowd, as many as remained, rushing towards the cage, the manager endeavouring to restrain the child's almost frantic sister, who was endeavouring to reach the door of the cage, and, lastly, the ferocious beast inside, who, probably, thinking his prey secure, stood with his paw upon the breast of the child, quietly surveying the crowd and awaiting further developments.

Forgetting the danger which we had been so earnestly debating, and seizing my loaded whip, in a second I had reached the cage, and stood within, with the door carefully closed behind me.

At the moment I entered, the lion looking toward me, I fastened my gaze upon him, and kept it so for perhaps four minutes, but as I was not sure of my power over the beast in his present condition, they were moments of terrible anxiety to me, and I was for the time being charmed, as it were, by his powerful gaze, so that it seemed hours before I recovered my presence of mind enough to advance, which I finally did, at the same time striking him a sharp blow with the whip across the neck, and ordering him up. Seeing evidently that I did not fear him, he obeyed, sullenly enough. Following him up with another blow, I ordered him into the corner, where he betook himself with an angry growl. Then taking up the boy, and at the same time keeping my eye fastened on the lion, without stopping for my usual obeisance to the audience, I backed out of the cage. But by the time I reached the door my strength gave way, and I had scarcely power to fasten the door after leaving the cage. I soon recovered, however, and, amid the cheers of the crowd, restored the boy to his now rejoicing sister and father, who had by this time reached the spot, and who, with tears in his eyes, begged me to call at his house on the morrow that he might express his thanks, which he was then incapable of doing on account of his emotions.

It appeared that the boy, with a child's natural curiosity, had been trying to get acquainted with the huge lion by poking him through the ventilator, which he could just reach, and which had been through some mistake left open, and had been observed by his sister, when it was just too late.

It was her frantic scream that had given me the first alarm.

After some conversation with my new acquaintances, I left the tent with my friend Benson, the manager, who, clapping me on the back as we passed out, said,—

"My boy, you made a good thing of it. I saw you casting sheep's eyes at that golden-haired sister. Something will come of it, my lad, mark me."

"Nonsense!" said I, laughing, and we parted until evening.

But that was the last time I entered the cages. The original tamer had recovered, and joined the exhibition at this place, but as I afterwards learned, he did not enter the cages until, having passed through several places, they obtained meat for the animals.

On the next day, as agreed upon, I called upon my friends to ascertain the condition of the child, whose injuries were nothing more than some severe scratches on the arm.

Although my connection with the exhibition ended here, I still found it convenient to remain in S—a few weeks, during which I called at the house of my friends several times, and upon each visit I became better acquainted with the blue-eyed sister, and at last I began to see, as my friend said, that "something might come" of my adventure.

Well, reader, not to prolong my story, I soon left S—for my home, and the blue-eyed damsel accompanied me as my wife, and as story-books say, "we lived happily for ever after."

C. C.

THE world is the great tempter; but at the same time it is the great monitor. It stimulates our pride by its pomp and show, its fleeting honours and prizes; it goads men to the race, and inspires them with covetousness and rapacity; but, on the other hand, it is the great memento and evidence of its own vanity and of the emptiness of everything it offers to us. It is the great saddener, the great warner, the great prophet.

SOMEONE who had an insight into human nature once said, "To treat men as if they were better than they are is the surest way to make them better." It would be an excellent thing for us all if we not only recognise this truth by the light of reason, but infused it into our daily practice. On the contrary, most of us appear to go upon the opposite principle. Whether it is that our minds dwell so much upon other people's failings that they are magnified in our view, or whether we fancy that they need a deeper conviction of the enormity of their misdoings to lead them to better things, certain it is that, so far from generally treating men as if they were better than they are, we usually treat them as if they were a little worse. And it is just because we do this so constantly and so unconsciously that we need special watch and care against it.

A DOG'S YAWN.—Did you ever watch a dog gape? For thoroughness and entire absence of affectation and mock shamfacedness, there is nothing like it. When a dog gapes, he doesn't screw his face into all sorts of unnatural shapes in an endeavour to keep his mouth shut with his jaws wide open. Neither does he put his paw up to his face in an apologetic way, while gaping in anguish, as it were. No, sir; when he gapes, he is perfectly willing that the whole world shall come to the show. He braces himself firmly on his fore feet, stretches out his neck, depresses his head, and his jaws open with graceful moderation. At first it is but an exaggerated grin, but when the gape is apparently accomplished, the dog turns out his elbows, opens his jaws another forty-five degrees, swallows an imaginary bone by a sudden and convulsive movement, curls up his tongue like the petal of a tiger lily, and shuts his jaws together with a snap. Then he assumes a grave and contented visage, as is eminently becoming to one who has performed a duty successfully and conscientiously.

A DAUGHTER'S DUTY.

"I am only doing my duty,"
Said Grace as she kept about
The tasks that from morn till evening
Were cleverly portioned out;
Though many were quite distasteful,
And many she fain would shun,
Yet she, in her loyal service,
Was faithful to every one.

Others might chide her daily,
And venture a stern reproof;
For, alas! there were many pleasures
From which she was kept aloof;
And to those who from such devotion
The virtuous maid would baffle,
"I am only doing my duty,"
Said Grace, with a ready smile.

Though there were hosts of daughters
Faithless to every trust,
Giving for bread of service
Only the beauty crust,
Here was a nobler rearing
Of the sweetly divine command;
And the love that her heart so quickened
Gave strength to her willing hand.

Patient, unselfish, and tireless,
She laboured, and murmured not,
Though thorns might be thickly scattered
The length and breadth of her lot;
Finding the fruits that yielded
Comfort and happiness.
"I am only doing my duty,"
Said Grace; "I could do no less."

What is a daughter's duty?
Only the souls can tell
Who themselves have rendered service
Faithfully, long, and well;
Asking no reward, no thanks,
No greater reward than the smile,
Then their own approving conscience,
And their heavenly Father's smile.

J. P.

OPALS AND DIAMONDS.

CHAPTER XXX.

Decorate her baby on to a chair, deaf for the first time since his birth to his little feeble cries, Lady Molyneux wrenched open the door, shrieking loudly for Poyton.

"There! your master! Poyton! Help! help! He will drown himself!" and not waiting to see if they followed, she tore through the window, and ran swiftly after the retreating form of her husband.

Fortunately Poyton was in the hall, and heard her cries. He had been on the watch, having noticed that his master was rather peculiar of late, and calling to the footman and butler, he joined in the race for life or death.

The madman had gained a good start, and was some way ahead, but Maggie, vered to superhuman efforts by her deadly terror, ran fleetly as a fawn, her little feet seeming hardly to touch the ground.

On they went—on, on. Through the garden, across the park, scaring the deer and the timid rabbits in their mad flight; over the woodland, down the meadows, to the river, that sparkled along, looking like molten silver in the beams of the newly-risen moon.

Straining every muscle, panting, breathless she flew on, keeping her eyes fixed on the dark figure flying before, closely followed by Poyton, who, to his own great astonishment, was unable to overtake the wretched wife, who tore along with such frenzied energy.

"Save him—save him!" she screamed, as the madman, reaching the banks, went headlong in with a loud splash, seeking to cool his fevered brain in the icy water.

Without a word the valet flung off his coat

and dashed in after him, striking out in the direction of Sir Lionel, who, though a good swimmer, made no effort to save himself, and went down with the stream, which was running rapidly.

"Can't you help—can't you do something?" implored Maggie, wringing her hands at the other servants who had come up.

"Yes, my lady, certainly," rejoined the butler, who, even in that supreme moment, though rather out of breath, spoke with his usual pompous and deferential manner. "James, you are a good swimmer. Go in the boat with William. Row after them, and look sharp."

In less than no time the men were in the boat, moored to the banks, and rowing rapidly after Poyton, who had just come up with the fugitive, who fought desperately, and tried to drown his would-be rescuer, as well as himself.

"Hit him—hit him," cried James, as he prepared to plunge in, "or he'll pull you down."

But Poyton was powerless, and somewhat exhausted after his long run and the desperate struggle he had gone through, which had ended in the barnet clamping his arm tightly round him, and he would inevitably have been drowned but for the timely assistance of the footman, who, clenching his fist, dealt the madman a blow which stunned him, and made him release his grip, and supporting the insensible form with his arm he struck out for the shore, leaving Poyton to be assisted by William.

Lady Molyneux had run along the bank, and was waiting with terrible dread at her heart, for the result of the struggle. She thought he was dead when she saw him lying at her feet, pale, cold, motionless; and with a low moan she dropped on her knees beside him, pillow- ing the heavy head on her breast.

"Don't—don't—take—on—no—my lady," gasped Poyton, between his pants for breath. "Sir Lionel is not dead."

"Not dead. Oh! Thank Heaven!" she cried.

"No, only stunned, insensible."

"What can we do? Where can we take him? He must be seen to at once?"

"Yes, my lady. If you will—allow me—I should—suggest the Dover House. It is only a hundred yards away."

For a moment Maggie shuddered, but then giving a gesture of consent, the servants fetched a hurdle, and laying their master's insensible body on it, they marched off slowly to the Rect, while Poyton sat for a minute with his head buried in his hands, to collect his scattered senses, as he staggered up to the Hall to send a messenger to Wingfield to fetch the family doctor, Mr. Bainbridge.

Nance answered the first clang of the bell, and at the sound of Lady Molyneux's voice threw wide the heavy door, gazing at the men as they tramped in with their burden, with keen curiosity in her sunken eyes.

"What's doing?" she inquired, with a wag of the head and a flop of the cap frills.

"Your master has met with an accident," replied her young mistress, quietly, for she had recovered her calmness and self-possession; for her worst was over, the bitterness of death past. "Light a fire immediately in the gun-room, and another in one of the bedrooms. The—the one usually occupied."

"And in the padded room, mem?" asked the old crane, with a queer look on her wrinkled face.

"Yes—yes" assented Maggie, pressing her hand to her breast, as though to suppress some sharp pain, for she knew that the padded room would be wanted, and Nance hurried off to do her bidding, muttering, "Ah, to be honest, laddie, such has come. He has crashed to the wall o' Molyneux's Rest, an' 'twill be his home for many a long day."

Silently the men carried the baronet up to the bedroom and placed him on a couch, by the blazing fire Dame Twitton had lighted. They were nearly all natives of Wingfield

and Inchfield, and well understood what had made Sir Lionel attempt to destroy himself.

"Can we do anything, my lady?" asked the grey-headed butler, with a glance of deep sympathy at his mistress.

"Yes. Get your master to bed as quickly as possible, and one of you go off at once to the Hall and bring Mr. Clinton down, and tell nurse to look after Master Jack well, as I shall not return there to-night."

"Yes, my lady."

And then Maggie, faint and weary, went to the gun-room, and dropping into a chair, sat there with her hands clasped over her eyes, waiting for some one to arrive.

"Dear Lady Molyneux, I am so grieved—so horrified. I cannot tell you what I feel."

It was young Clinton's voice that broke the spell of silence, and she looked up at him with tear-drenched eyes, and he gazed at her with a world of pity in his blue orbs. She looked so wan—so white—so unutterably wretched, her costly crimson satin dinner dress, smirched and stained by contact with the damp grasses and moist earth; her lovely hair tossed and tumbled, half-loosened and streaming over her shoulders, her lips quivering piteously. He would have given all he possessed to be able to comfort this woman, whom he respected and admired so much.

"Yes, it is horrible," she said at last, checking back her sobs, "and I am all alone. I only some of them were here."

"Can I help you?" he said, eagerly. "Is there is anything I can do pray command me; I am at your service."

"Thanks," she answered. "I—I wait some telegrams sent. One to Eunice—one to Elsie."

"Yes. I will go over to Inchfield, and send them the first thing in the morning; the office is shut now."

"You—you—know—what to say?" she faltered. "My husband is—mad!"

"Yes, yes," he said, gently. "Don't distress yourself."

"Ah! there is the doctor," she exclaimed, as the sound of wheels was heard on the gravel path beneath.

"Yes; shall I come with you to see him?"

"No, thanks. I would rather be alone."

"Will he recover?" she asked, as she stood by her husband's bed a minute later.

"In what way do you mean?" asked Mr. Bainbridge, avoiding her eyes, as he drew some brandy between his patient's teeth.

"He—he will—not—die—now?"

"No," he replied, "he will not die, not. But tell me how it happened—all shortly!"

he added, abruptly.

"No, he will not die," he repeated, when Lady Molyneux had finished her recital. "But it would be useless to try and conceal from you the fact that your husband has lost his reason."

"I know," she answered, with stern calmness. "Will he ever regain it?"

"That I cannot say at present; time alone will show. He may with great care and proper treatment."

"What am I to do?" she asked, desperately. "You must advise me, doctor."

"Of course I will, dear lady," he rejoined, soothingly. "The best thing will be to have Sir Lionel here, as he may be subject to fits of frenzy. Poyton will attend him, and we must have a resident doctor here, I mean, to make all things correct and legal, as they were in Sir Robert's time. Some old man; past his work will be glad enough to accept the post, for the sake of a home and a small salary; I will call on him daily. He will have the best advice from London, as you must keep up for his sake and that of your child, and do not give way to dismal forebodings."

"Yes—yes, just go!" she agreed.

"There, he is coming round now," continued Mr. Bainbridge, as the patient opened his eyes and looked about, commencing to mutter and babble to himself in a way which tortured the heart of the wretched woman

who stood by his side the whole night through listening to his frenzied wanderings.

"Lady Molyneux, you will kill yourself," expostulated Clinton, as he entered the bedroom on his return from Inchfeld, after sending the telegrams. "Not a minute's sleep have you had, or a mouthful of food, and that from you are wearing is unfitted for your occupation as sick nurse. I have taken the liberty of ordering your carriage to come here; it is waiting now. Let me beg of you to go home for a time, and get some rest and refreshment."

As she refused to leave the gibbering man, who fixed his wild eyes on her with such awful gloom; but when she was told that little Jack had been asking for her the mother dove swooned, and she allowed herself to be wrapped in the warm cloak Clinton brought, and drove back with him, catching her child in her arms when he toddled out to meet her, and covering his tiny face with tears and kisses, leaving him in the room with her while she took off her satin robe and put on a warm cloth one, and sipped the hot retarding coffee which Bainsbridge brought.

Yet she was too restless to stay long, and after giving her maid directions to send several things down to the Rectory, and strict injunctions to be careful about Jack, she went back to her post by her husband's bed.

Three days later Eunice and the Comte arrived, accompanied, to Maggie's great astonishment, by the dowager, who looked dreadfully ill and quite heartbroken; for after all her care, all her agony of mind, the son she loved so dearly had fallen a victim to the hereditary malady of his family, and her anguish and trouble had been in vain.

"This is a sad affair," said the Comtesse, as she stood in the gun-room talking to her sister-in-law.

"Terrible!" acquiesced Maggie, wringing her thin, white hands.

"What brought it about? Mr. Bainsbridge says from his ravings that it was the result of some shock."

"Yes; he became aware that there was enmity in the family."

"Ah!" ejaculated Eunice. "Who told him that?"

"Mr. O'Hara."

And then Maggie told what she knew, for old Nance had confessed her *lass majesté*, had recounted how Terence brought the baronet to the Rectory during her absence, and her belief that he had tried to drive him mad.

The crime told the tale with many tears, and sobs, and bitter regrets that after sixty years' service she should be the one to indirectly cause the nurse to fall on her young master's head, and had begged Maggie's forgiveness with vehement earnestness, vowing never to touch another drop of whiskey; and she was forgiven, for Maggie knew that Nance was no match for the man who had vowed vengeance against Sir Lionel, and had pitted his strength against hers.

"The wretch!" commented the Comtesse, when the story was finished. "He will have ample revenge. Not only will my brother be a lunatic, but the shock and the fatigue of the journey will kill mother."

And she was right. In less than a month the Dowager Lady Molyneux was laid to rest in the family vault in Wingfield churchyard. The violence of her grief wore out her emaciated frame; the revelation of the secret she had long kept killed the unhappy mother.

Eunice stayed over Christmas at the Hall, and then, seeing she could do no good, for the unfortunate man who had lost his reason, she went back to France, leaving Maggie to bear her grief alone, with great reluctance it must be acknowledged; but as she expected shortly to be a mother she had no alternative, and as the grief she had recently gone through had rather somewhat, the Comte was anxious to get her to her sunny southern home.

CHAPTER XXXI.

LITTLE JACK.

THE time passed wearily enough to the beautiful chateleine of Molyneux Hall after the departure of her guests. Daily she went to the Dower House and spent several hours with her husband, who never took the slightest notice of her, beyond saying when she came in, "Good morning, lady, pretty lady," after which he would collapse into the moody silence habitual to him. Still she would sit there with him, singing in a low voice, or reading, doubting if he even heard, except in a dull faraway manner, yet feeling it her duty.

The only pleasure in her dreary life was little Jack. He had grown such a sweet winsome child, his innocent prattle seemed to soothe the wounded, sorely-ried heart. But alas! even this consolation was taken from her.

In the summer an epidemic broke out in the village, a sort of low fever which proved fatal to young children, and little Jack caught it. One evening, on her return from the Dower House, she saw he looked flushed, as she bent over his cot, and taking light she sent off for Bainsbridge.

Eagerly she scanned his face as he looked at the tiny patient.

"What is it, doctor?" she asked, scarcely above a whisper.

"The fever, Lady Molyneux."

"Is— is there danger?" Her ashy lips could hardly form the words.

"Great danger. It is almost always fatal to children under five."

"Oh, Heaven!" With a moan the wretched mother sank on her knees, and prayed that her child might be spared, her one lamb, weeping bitterly—those deep convulsive sobs that are wrung only from a breaking heart.

But her prayers were in vain. Before many moons waxed and waned little Jack breathed his last, and lay in his cot beautiful, white, serenely quiet, asleep forevermore—his waxen fingers clasped on the still breast that would never again pulse and throb with life and motion.

He had gone to Heaven to be one of God's angels. When Maggie saw him lying so still she gave a great cry, and then the anguish of her heart seemed to kill her. A faintness like death stole over her, a deadly languor. The cot, the room, the servants thronging round her all faded from view; a darkness surrounded her, and she fell senseless across the body of her child.

Brain fever rendered Maggie insensible to her sufferings for many weeks, but when she recovered her senses her agony and regret made life unbearable. She longed to die in those sad, dreary days, yet the shadow of death never came near her. She knew the "burden of long living" with "weary days was clothed and fed." Her life seemed a blank. Sometimes she could not bear the pain of her thoughts, and would pace restlessly up and down the moss-grown terraces of her paternal home, accompanied by her faithful friend and companion, Rufus, who would follow close at his mistress's heels—up and down, up and down, to and fro, to and fro, in the restless promenade. One evening towards the end of September, she was watching the sun go down in regal splendour; the star of night tremble upon the last crimson cloud, and stopping her restless pacing, she leant on the balustrade, gazing out at the hazy outline of the distant mountains, over whose tall summits the golden stars were beginning to blink their bright eyes. "The day was done, and the darkness fell from the wings of night."

"Rufus, Rufus, I am very sad, very lonely," said the worse than widowed woman, with a heavy sigh, stooping to caress the black muzzle of the faithful animal sitting at her feet. "My life is wretched, my hopes wrecked."

"As they ought to be," interrupted a voice beside her, and turning with a start she found herself face to face with O'Hara.

She shuddered as she met the blaze of those

cruel blue eyes, as though the warmth of the balmy wind had turned chill and cold and shrank back from him.

"I tell you once again, as I told you long ago, you have your deserts," he went on in a pitiless tone. "There are some crimes—some deeds for which there is no name—the crime of murdering a man's son, wrecking his sweetest aspirations; crushing and beating down, till it lies prone in the mire, all that is good and true in him; raining, almost at its outset, an existence that might have been an honourable, useful one, turning the sweet well-springs of life, into a bitter gnawing poison; killing what is best, the mind and intellect, leaving the shattered body to drag out its miserable existence. This was your crime, and no punishment is too heavy, too much for you to receive as payment. Your ladyship is lonely,—so am I; your ladyship has no interest in life—neither have I. The wreck of my life was your doing, the wreck of yours mine. I swore to do it. Your husband the man you devoted me for is a hopeless lunatic, and your child, your cherished only one, is dead."

"Spare me, spare me!" she cried, stretching out her hands entreatingly; "you have taken your revenge, and it has been an ample one. Can you not leave me in peace now, such peace as I can hope to have in this world?"

"No."

"Have you not one vulnerable spot in that callous heart—one grain of pity in that heap of iniquity within you?"

"Not a spot—not a grain," he answered cruelly. "I took care to leave me none. I am pitiless. I swore to have revenge. I have had it. I exult in my triumph, in your defeat," and Terence O'Hara turned and strode away through the darkness of the autumn night, leaving the woman he had loved so madly alone with her great despair.

"What can make him so unforgiving—so pitiless!" she murmured, when he was lost to sight in the gathering gloom. "How I fear and dread him. Oh! if I could only go to some place on earth where I would be safe from his bitter reproaches—his cruel persecution."

But she could not—she could not leave Sir Lionel—and she remained at the Hall in daily dread of another visit from her enemy. It became a madness of terror to her at last—this fear he would return to persecute her. She thought she would lose her reason, and would probably have done so, only that one morning she received a letter from Maad, saying that Major Clinton had left the army, and that they were coming to England, and would be with her a few days after the letter.

Words can hardly paint Maggie's joy and relief when her sister and brother-in-law arrived, and established themselves at the Hall. She felt safe and calmed, no longer lonely and sad. She relied on her clever sister, and hoped great things from her advent.

"How you have changed!" remarked Maad, the morning after her arrival, looking at her sister with critical eyes.

"Changed! Do you wonder, after what I have gone through?" asked Lady Molyneux with a little hysterical sob.

"No. I don't wonder. I am only surprised that you have not altered more. But we must try and bring the roses back to your cheeks, and the light to your eyes."

"I am afraid that is not possible," with a sad shake of the head.

"Why not?"

"All the joy has gone out of my life, and therefore the beauty out of my face."

"We must bring the joy back."

"I don't think you can."

"I shall try. Of course, I can't bring little Jack back to life—" even Maad's voice had a tremor in it as she spoke of the child—"but I shall do all I can to restore Lionel's reason."

"Do you think there is any hope?" asked his wife, with a sudden flash of happiness lighting up her wan face.

"Certainly I do. Don't you think there is,



[“WHAT AM I TO DO?” ASKED MAGGIE, DESPAIRINGLY. “YOU MUST ADVISE ME, DOCTOR.”]

Clifford?” she continued addressing her husband who sat near.

“Yes, my love,” answered the Major, rising and coming over to them. “I think if we have good advice that something might be done towards restoring his sanity.”

The bright light from the window fell full on his face as he spoke, and Maggie wondered at the lines of pain that were graven round the handsome mouth, the look of sorrow in the once sunny eyes. Yet she would not have wondered had she known all.

The Major had come back from India, covered with glory and medals, but lacking the one thing that would have made his life worth living—the love of the woman who was his wife. He had failed to touch the cold heart of the woman he adored, failed to win her affections, and there was a great horrible void in his aching heart—a want—which left his existence barren. She was a model wife, and was scrupulously careful to attend to all his wants—obey all his wishes—but she was ice to his fire—cold as the snow on mountain tops—as the water in deep wells.

Her cheek never flushed under the touch of his lips, her eyes never brightened and shone at his approach, and she never offered him those little tender attentions that are so pleasing to men from the women they love. She didn't want them herself, and couldn't understand why he should. She had no craving to feel his arms about her, or his head on her shoulder, or his kisses on her lips. She was cold, hard, practical, and thought it arrant folly to indulge in sentiment and softness. In fact, she rather objected to her husband doing so, and she would exclaim when he kissed her fondly, “Really, Clifford, I wish you could abstain from embracing me. You ruffle my hair, and toss my laces. Love me without being demonstrative, pray,” and he would turn white, and leave her side immediately, not wishing to press his attentions where they were not wanted, though the

woman to whom he offered them *did* belong to him, and the pained look would deepen in his honest blue eyes.

“But I have had all the great men down from London, and they give little hope,” remarked Lady Molyneux, wistfully, after a pause.

“When was that?” demanded Mrs. Clinton.

“Lately?”

“No, when he was first taken ill.”

“Who has seen him during the last year?”

“No one but Bainbridge.”

“And have you noticed any difference in his manner?”

“He is quieter, that is all.”

“That may be a good sign. I should advise you to send for this Australian doctor, Henniker. He is said to be wonderfully clever in cases of madness.”

“I will do so at once,” responded Maggie, going over to her davenport, and commencing to write. “Give me his address?”

“There,” she continued a few minutes later, “I have asked him to come down to-morrow, or as soon as he can, and I will send James into Inchfield with it to catch the post.”

“That is right,” commended Maud, approvingly.

“He may suggest some new treatment that will perhaps prove beneficial.”

“Heaven grant he may,” said the young wife, fervently. “It is so bitter to be parted in this way from my dear one—to see him there daily, and yet be cut off from all intercourse with him, all interchange of thoughts and ideas,” and she sobbed faintly, though the fountain of her tears was almost dry; she had wept so much since her husband lost his reason.

“It must, indeed, be terrible for you,” remarked the Major, with deep sympathy in his tones, for he felt they met there on equal ground, as he was as much cut off from interchange of thought with his wife as if she had been the greatest lunatic under the sun.

“It is terrible. I don't know now how I have lived through it, and the loss of my baby. The days seemed so long—so dreary.”

“I cannot count, they seem so long, if months or years have passed since then.”

“I only know,” she went on drearily, “that I wished to die.”

“You must not wish that now,” he said brightly. “You must be hopeful, and cheery, instead of despondent.”

“Yet it is hard to be cheerful when one's heart is heavy and sad.”

“Of course,” chimed in Maud, “we are going to try, however, to make it light and joyful. And now I propose that we go and see the patient. What do you say?”

“Yes, by all means,” responded Maggie, promptly, and the three set out for the Dover House.

(To be continued.)

FOR MAN AND WIFE.—The instinct towards neatness and beauty dies hard in womankind, but it can be utterly destroyed by the slow process of discouragement and the fact that nobody cares. The truth is that human beings need not only to see cleanliness, but to see variety and freshness and change; and the house-cleaning should be no more an object of pleasure and interest to the woman than to the man. There is much that she can do without him. She can scrub the floor, but he could and should whiten the ceiling. She cannot paper the walls, perhaps, though many a farmer's wife has done even that; but give her the money, and she will buy the paper and find some one to hang it. After her willing hands have scrubbed away last year's fly specks, any man who can handle tools can make the frames for screens for her windows and doors. If, besides this, he buys the prepared paints, and little by little gives a fresh coat to the various rooms, it is no more than his share of the task.



[A STEP, AND SHE RAISES HER HEAD TO FIND THAT LORD NUGENT IS AT HER SIDE, HIS HAND RESTING ON HER SHOULDER.]

NOVELLITE.]

THE QUEEN OF THE SEA.

—O—

CHAPTER IV.

As Lady Cressford releases Zoe she notices for the first time how pale she is, and that her eyes are encircled with dark rims. She adds anxiously,—"Why, Zoe, dear, you are not well. Why did you not tell me?"

"I am all right, mamma. I have only a little headache, I suppose I miss my morning walk," she replies evasively.

What is not the headache responsible for? It puts all its ailments and griefs upon the defenceless head, or some part of the human system, and has even been known to shuffle its woes upon the poor defenceless teeth, declaring that they ache—anything, so that it makes a scapegoat of something rather than confess to its own weakness.

"Ah, to be sure, the rain kept you a prisoner," remarks her ladyship; "if it clears up Ernest and you can take a canter, dear, and that won't fatigue you so much as walking. I think you over-do it. I must look more carefully after you; you are too energetic for your strength."

"Who is that, Zoe? I never saw him before," asks Lord Nugent, as they ride past the Willows, where Tracy is just coming out, and on seeing the pair raises his hat courteously to her.

"That is Dr. Leyton," she returns, trying to hide the crimson tide that she feels is rising to her tell-tale face, and bowing her head over the pommel and patting her mare's glossy neck.

"A very fine man!" he says. "Do you know him?"

"Yes," she stammers. "He visits us sometimes. He—he saved my life one morning; I must have been drowned but for him."

"I wish I knew that before," he says warmly. "I would have stopped and asked him to have accepted my hand, and thanked him from the bottom of my heart for saving my darling. Why, if I had lost you, I should have broken my heart. So he was the brave fellow! All I can say is, if ever he wants a friend, I am the man. Is he married? because you could present his wife with a suite of jewels—anything, so long as we show our gratitude."

"No, he is not married; he lives in that house with his mother."

"Perhaps struggling, and not able to take a wife. Want of means," he thinks. "I must look him up, and see what I can do for him."

"Oh! it has come to this at last," groans Leyton, when they had passed. "Can it be true? Is he the man? Perhaps he is a relative. What would I not give to know the truth? If he robs me of my Sea Queen, what will life be to me? Why did I not go and explain all to the baronet? Surely it would be better than suffering like this? He might have had some compassion on us; and, now, if that is he, it is too late. Oh! mother, dear, if you only knew the bitter, torturing anguish I am enduring—and I forbade you to go and intercede for us. Oh! this is madness, torture;" dashing into the house, and casting himself down on a couch, and hiding his head on his hands. A very tempest of anguish passes over him, when he feels a soft hand on his hot forehead, and then two tears fall on his cheek, wrung from the rivulet of his mother's heart—bitter, sweet warm tears, that fell like dew on parched grass, and lay like rain-drops; a tribute of her loving sympathy.

"Heaven send my darling boy comfort," she prays, "and strength to bear his trouble; without Thy aid we are powerless."

"Amen," he murmurs, and then he is alone. She had gone as silently as she had entered, but she shed comfort on the storm-beaten soul, and he felt renewed strength and courage,

and went out into the air, and commenced his duties again.

Cressford Chase is *en fête*, in honour of Lord Nugent's visit, and sportsmen are in their glory, for the game is plentiful and well-preserved.

"Lord Nugent—Dr. Leyton!" says the baronet, by way of introduction, as the party are about to storm the plantation.

"I am more than pleased to make your acquaintance," says his lordship warmly, "for you have rendered me one of the greatest services man could another," holding out his hand, which Tracy ignored, but in such a well-bred manner that his lordship thought he never noticed it at the moment.

"You make too much of a simple act that any swimmer could achieve. The water is my natural element, I might almost say," he replies indifferently, walking away in the direction of his host.

"Queer fellow!" thinks his lordship. "Evidently a man of few words; but his eyes, why, they were perfectly fierce. If I didn't know he was a stranger to me, I should say he was my enemy. To the deuce with him; he makes me quite shiver. But there a man can't help his looks; I mustn't forget that I am indebted to him, beyond even repayment. I'll break through his icy reserve somehow; it's hard if I don't succeed."

Had his lordship but guessed the truth he would not have been so fortunate in bringing down his birds that morning; ping went his gun, and down fluttered the bird, at almost the first shot in nearly every case.

"Never saw such a splendid shot in my life," remarks an old gentleman admiringly to the baronet. "I shouldn't care to meet him at twelve paces, not even in my best days; he's a crack shot, and no mistake, and I flatter myself I was considered a first-class one too."

"Yes, he is," replies Sir Arthur, proudly. "He is my future son-in-law; he'll make

havoc among the birds many a day I hope; but Leyton seems to be as good as Lord Nugent; he has bagged well."

"Ah, the young ones seem to carry all before them, Cressford," sighs the old gentleman dimly; "we old fellows are not in it now."

"What a distant, reserved fellow Dr. Leyton is," observes Lord Nugent, as the baronet and he are walking home. "I wished to thank him for his noble aid in saving Zoe's life, and he seemed perfectly indignant at my even referring to the subject—feminine proud fellow."

"You surprise me!" returns Sir Arthur. "I always found him a most agreeable, open-hearted man; in fact, I like him very much. He's capital society, too. You will alter your opinion when you know more of him."

"I really cannot excuse you, Leyton," says the baronet. "What will the ladies say? You are to come and dine with us, I have made up my mind. Besides, Lord Nugent wishes to become better acquainted with you, and he will probably be your neighbour several months in the year, when a certain event takes place."

"I must not be obtuse, Sir Arthur," replies the doctor firmly; "my professional duties cannot be put aside, however my inclinations may be to make one of your party."

"Oh! of course, I see. I thought for the moment, that your patients have claims which cannot be put aside. At all events, you will try and run in to-morrow, either to lunch or dinner, won't you?"

"I cannot promise," he replies, evasively; "so I will say good day, and thank you for a pleasant day's sport."

"Never saw such a change in my life," mutters the baronet; "why he was a very convivial, frank fellow a few weeks back, and now he looks stern and haughty. What Nugent says is quite right; there is a decided change in him. Perhaps he's in difficulties. I wish I knew, I'd help him over the stile, and rejoice to do so. I feel I can never pay the debt I owe him for my darling's life, Heaven bless her. How I shall miss her! But there, she will be the happiest woman in the world with Nugent; he's the finest fellow in the whole creation."

"What would I not give to be there to-night," murmurs Doctor Leyton, as he walks toward the Willows listlessly, gun on shoulder, a stalwart, good-looking man, full of vigour, and yet a slowly creeping paralysis pervades his every turn and movement.

The sun is going down in a fiery disc around a bell of glowing crimson, and reflects upon his sunny curls, bathing him in a very sea of rosy colour.

But he strolls on perfectly indifferent to the beautiful sunset, and the sweet evening vespers of the birds which are pouring forth their most enchanting songs to their partners before retreating to rest. All is dark and dreary; nature seems a black abyss, where no hope can penetrate, nothing but despair to look forward to.

"How I writhed when he smiled into my face, and thanked me for saving my darling's life—she whom I would die to save. I felt for the moment I must have dashed his hopes to sterility, and told him he was living in a fool's paradise; that Zoe, my sweet Zoe Queen, was mine, my very own, my love by all that is true on earth. Oh, how can I give her up? His love can never be what mine is. She is only a beautiful girl whom he wishes to marry, and delights to look upon, but so me she is my dream of all that is pure and lovely, my twin soul. I will not give up hope. No,"—clenching his teeth tightly and quickening his speed—"I'll enter the lists boldly, and pit my strength against his, lord though he is. I am armed more than he, for I have the key of her heart. Who knows I may win my darling yet? She loves me; there is my sheet anchor, courage and determination shall be my weapons of defence now."

Many were the tears poor Zoe shed that morning as she watched Tracy, with yearning

love and tenderness, pass out of the gates with her father and Lord Nugent.

"What must he think of me?" she says sorrowfully; "how mean and false I must seem in his eyes! I know my heart will break soon. Oh! mamma, if you only knew how wretched your child is, surely you would pity and have compassion on me. If this is what he saved me for I wish the sea had closed over me, and hidden me from the world for ever. I should at least have gone before my Creator face from deceit and treachery."

Strange to say, neither her mother or friends noted her sad, wistful face that day; or if Lady Cressford did, she took no notice openly. So she rambled about the house and grounds listlessly, dreading the evening when Ernest would return, and she be compelled to smile and listen to his rhapsodies as he sits beside her at dinner.

"Perhaps Tracy will be here," she thinks, miserably; "will they place him opposite us? Oh! I know I shall scream out or do something dreadful if they do. I can never meet his eyes; they would stab me with reproaches. I must see him and stop him from coming to-night. It would destroy him to meet me in Ernest's eyes, laden as they are with affection, and his air of appropriation towards me which makes me feel almost to hate him."

When the mysterious gleaming came its grey mantle round the earth and she stole out of the house and ran through the private part of the park into a copse where the overhanging dense foliage were becoming bare and lay in deep brown and yellow heaps, which her fast flying little feet crushed, bringing forth a faint, but sweet odour of the dying year.

"Will he never come?" she murmurs fastidiously, as she paces the lane by the side of the Willows which she must pass through to reach his home; "perhaps mamma will miss me, and get anxious. Oh! that I knew what to do for the best."

Suddenly she found herself clasped in Tracy's arms, as he cries fondly,—

"My sweet Zoe, my darling, how I have hungered and prayed to see you! and Heaven was there, and all was forgotten in that moment of delicious joy. The beating of their hearts was all the sound to be heard in the peaceful evening stillness; their lips met in one long, lingering passionate kiss that expence and misery made doubly precious, and her soon head sank on his breast in a dreamy state of exquisite bliss and ecstasy as she says softly,—

"Dear Tracy, you do not despise me, then? I thought you would hate me almost, and that would crush all happiness from my life."

"My love is too strong, too deep, my darling, for that. I could not cast you from my heart, even if I tried."

"Then you do still love and trust me?" she pleads, with the low light in her starry eyes.

"Yes!" he says brokenly, "and shall, to the end of all time."

"But if I become Lord Nugent's wife," she says, with a ring of old anguish.

A fierce pang smote him at the maddening thought, and he put her from him while the fires of love suddenly grew chill, and says bitterly,—

"Do you mean that you are really going to perjure your innocent soul by words that will be false before Heaven's holy altar?"

"You are cruel," she falters, as she tears start into her eyes; "I shall not be Lord Nugent's wife, it would be a deadly sin to him, and to me."

"You swear that?" he says earnestly.

"Yes Tracy, if you will not believe me, I will take Heaven to witness my truth."

"Can you forgive me?" he falters in a tone of abject repentance, as he snatches her to his arms again, and holds her as if he feared she would fade from his grasp. "But how will you evade all the persuasion and arguments which will be brought to bear upon you?"

"I have no idea," she replies, pitiously; "I only know I will not be his wife; I must be firm, and tell mamma all some day, I sup-

pose, that is what I dread. Poor mamma, she has been so tender and loving, that to grieve her makes me wretched, and she has set her whole heart upon my marriage; it is so hard to wound those you love."

They linger on in the gloaming, their hands clasped together through the lane, till the lights of the Chase warn them that the time is waning, and they must part.

How exquisite was the pain of that parting kiss, because they knew not what a day might bring forth, for fate had yet to be tested as to whether it would be kind or cruel to the love which had grown in their hearts like delicate flowers which the frosts of separation might wither, or the bright sun of promise blossom into roses that would never die.

The sea dashed against the mighty cliffs, those giant bulwarks that said to its unruly uncontrolled movements, "Thus far shalt thou come, and no farther," seemed to speak in mysterious notes of warning, as if the words were—"only love will save you from being overwhelmed, be true to each other, and the bow of promise will appear in the dark sky, and the clouds will roll asunder, and Heaven will be revealed."

The night wind rustled the heathen, and the soft murmur of insects made a lullaby that brought peace to their hearts.

"Oh, my darling, I cannot bear to say good-bye, because I give you up to him. He may be, and no doubt is a noble fellow; but how can I look upon him otherwise than as my enemy. Zoe, someday I shall claim you as my wife—perhaps soon, and then hand-in-hand we will confront the storm, Love's beacon lighting us on to a haven of happiness and joy."

One clinging kiss, in which their souls seemed to unite, and he released her, watching her as she fled with the fleetness of a roe, hungering for one more glimpse of that lovely form when the deepening shadows enveloped it, and shut his darling out from his gaze.

"I have won," he murmurs; "love must ever prove victorious. Oh, Thou, who sittest above the Heavens, watch over us, pardon our imperfections, and grant that we may yet worship Thee in the love of our hearts."

With bent head he sought his home, for some mysterious voice seemed to whisper in his ear—"not yet will be the victory; man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upwards."

CHAPTER IV.

"My dear Zoe, I do wish you would show a little girlish interest in your approaching marriage," says Lady Cressford, faintly. "Here am I, harassed to death with one thing and another, while you sit calmly down, as if the whole affair was perfectly indifferent to you."

"What would you wish me to do, mamma," she says, languidly.

"How can I tell you, dear child, if your nature is so cold and unimpassioned. Why is quite grieves me to see you so changed and listless. What on earth has come over you? Poor Ernest feels it, I am sure. You need a cold piece of marble, instead of my dear, bright Zoe of a few short weeks back. I very much fear that accident did you no good; you have never been the same since."

Lady Cressford was not aware how true her words were, to a certain extent, when she said Zoe had never been the same girl in nature from that memorable morning when Tracy rescued her; but it was not owing to the loss her mother attributed it to, or the good lady would have, indeed, been bitterly awakened and grieved.

"Perhaps you are right," Zoe says, meekly; "do not be alarmed, for, indeed, you would not if you knew all."

"I thought as much," returns her ladyship, anxiously; "it is your head that is affected. I must send for Dr. Leyton, and ask him seriously. I cannot understand why he comes now."

"It is not a doctor, mamma, that I want."

replies the girl, wistfully; "you misunderstand me altogether. It is that I am not happy."
"Really, dearest, I cannot listen to such silly nonsense. I suppose it's a little lover's quarrel, and that you are to blame. I am pretty near certain. All I can say is, make it up; your future husband is too good a man to be played and trifled with."

"Oh! how fate seems against me!" sighs poor Zoe, as her mother leaves the room, looking anything but pleased at her child's strange conduct, which she puts down to a fitful, ungrateful spirit. "If she would only be patient, and listen to me. Why cannot I summon the courage to tell her that this marriage can never take place? All seems against me. What can I do? I only know I dare not marry Ernest."

Lord Nugent became hateful to her, not that he was less noble, or showed her any want of affection or attention, but her heart had changed towards him, for true love made it clear to her that in marrying him she would be sacrificing the happiness of her life.

Not for worlds would she wish that things were otherwise than they were, loving Tracy as she did with all the strength of her pure, innocent, girlish nature.

She sat on in the handsome drawing-room, looking oh! so sad and wistful into the fire, as if she could draw therefrom some augury of her future.

The flickering light played on her purple velvet robe, and wandered in playful reflections to her face, as if to coax away her sadness.

She made a beautiful picture of sweet girlish beauty—one tiny foot tapping the fender, her chin supported in her tapering fingers as she mused on and on, the theme being love, which, though perfumed with roses, bore sharp thorns, that stung her cruelly.

A step, and she raises her head to find that Lord Nugent is at her side, his hand resting lightly on her shoulder, his eyes devouring her face with love's hunger.

"Zoe, I've come to ask you a very great favour. I want my damask rose to be very tied to her big heart of an Ernest. Say, in your mood to-night this morning? Dare I plead, for love's sake, that our marriage should take place in a month. I long to take you abroad to sunny Italy, where blue skies and flowers would bring back the roses to your cheek."

"Indeed, my lord, I cannot answer you now."

He starts in pained surprise, for never until now had she addressed him so formally.

"What have I done, Zoe, that you treat me so coldly and call me my lord, as if you and I were strangers? Have you forgotten that we are affianced?—that you told me with your own dear lips I had gained your love? Come, smile at me. Tell me that I am still your Ernest, or I shall think that someone has been instilling poison into your mind. Cannot you see that every pulse of my heart throbs for you? Oh, that I could reveal all my love! I have given up distinction, fame, all for your dear sake."

"Sometimes we find that we err. Is it not possible that we should have made a mistake?—that our love is not deep and true enough to mingle our lives together?" He stares at her, thinking that the voice and words were those of some other woman, for to him the change in her manner and sentiments was altogether inexplicable, nor could he find a key to the problem that had been exercising his mind for days past.

"An your affianced husband I have every right to ask you for an explanation," he says, with a slight bitterness in his voice that stung her to the very quick, for too well she knew that she alone was responsible for the change that had come over their lives. "The papers have spoken of our approaching marriage. Your father and mother have referred to it only this morning. Surely you would not make me a butt for society to aim at; to be the jest of the clubs, to be pitied and ridiculed? I who have made heavy sacrifices for your sake?"

She saw only Tracy's pleading eyes, im-

passioned face, when she says, tremulously,—"I only know that I am not the Zoe you knew a few short months back. Love has to make sacrifices sometimes. You are noble and kind. Release me from my engagement, and the friendship of my life will be yours."

She marvelled greatly at her courage in speaking thus plainly, but love it was that was urging her to plead for her release.

For some moments he stands silently contemplating her thinking if in his absence she had given her heart to another, and not being able to bear the torture of suspense he says, hoarsely,—

"Tell me Zoe, do you love another?" Rising, she confronts him with flashing eyes, and says,—

"My lord I am no slave to be questioned. When you know how to treat me I shall see you again; for the present I must say good-day."

She sweeps past him in anger; in that he had dared to probe her heart and to wrest from her the sweet secret that nestled there like a timid bird, forgetting that he had a right to put the question and she to answer it without evasion, and in very truth.

Blind, unreasoning love for the man who had stirred her young heart to its innermost depths had made her unjust to one who had every claim upon her confidence.

"Poor darling!" he murmurs, not yet grasping even a shadow of the truth. "I fear her mother is right, and that her recent accident has affected her brain. I will see Doctor Leyton, and gather from him whether my conjecture is correct."

While Lord Nugent is making his way to the Willows Zoe lays on her bed, her face covered with her hands, and tears coursing each other down her face, thoroughly sad and wretched, for she had thrown down the gauntlet of defiance, and could not hope that his lordship would abstain from seeking an early explanation, when the truth would have to be told, and she be brought face to face with the just anger of her parents.

But, come what might, she is firmly resolved to be true to Tracy Leyton and to her wife, even at the sacrifice of the love of both her father and mother.

"Ah, there is Leyton himself," says Lord Nugent, on catching sight of the doctor, "I am in luck. If he confirms my surmise I shall telegraph for the best medical skill and advice that money can secure."

"What brings him here?" mutters Leyton, a fierce scowl coming into his handsome face, for the sight of his rival is hateful to him, because he came between Zoe and himself.

Turning to his mother he says,—
"I am not at home to-day to anybody, mind."

Presently the servant enters with his lordship's card, when Mrs. Leyton says,—

"Show his lordship in; I will be with him presently."

"Mother, why do you consent to receive him here?" her son asks, almost angrily, jealousy getting the better of even the veneration he felt for her.

"Why not, Tracy? He may be in want of your professional advice."

Then noting the flashing flash that overspread his brow, and mounts to his temples, she adds,—

"Boy, do not let passion get the better of your reason; remember what is due to him as the affianced husband of Miss Cresford."

"I could receive anybody but him, mother," he says, hoarsely. "Heaven grant that he and I may never meet, lest evil should come of it."

"Fie, fie, dear Tracy, no woman is worth doing an injustice for. Is it for this that I took your dear father's place, and strove to instil into your mind lessons of love and charity to all men? Go to your room, and on your knees ask your Father and mine to give you a better heart, dear boy. You are all I have left in this world, and remember that my life is bound up in yours. Oh! my son, resist

temptation, and it will flee from you; give up the girl, even if you have to sacrifice your practice here. Money is of no account where honour is concerned."

His answer was to leave the room in dudgeon, for the mere suggestion to give up his prize, wrested from the cruel sea, was gall and worm-wood to his soul.

"I greatly fear no good will come of his love for the girl," she murmurs. "Oh! why did she come to tempt my boy from the path of honour? She is the wife of that other man already in the sight of Heaven, and it would be wrong for Tracy to come between them, much as he may love her."

"Cannot I see Doctor Leyton," asks his lordship, bowing courteously to the gentle lady, whose kind face quite won upon him from the first.

"I regret to tell you that he is too much engaged to see anybody," she says, looking with pitiful eyes at one whom her son had unintentionally wronged at first, and now hated because he had come to claim Zoe for his wife; "can I deliver any message for you, my lord?"

"I think, dear madame, I can trust you," he says, smiling kindly. "I am greatly concerned about Miss Cresford, as are also Sir Arthur and his wife. We have an idea that the accident she met with is developing grave symptoms, amounting almost to aberration of mind. Doctor Leyton has attended her professionally, and I wished to hear whether he thinks it advisable for me to summon additional medical aid."

"Poor boy!" thinks the old lady, "the disease lies in the heart, and not the brain. My son has no power to help you, for he covets her for himself."

"I will mention the matter to him," she says, "and trust that your fears may not be realized."

"Will you kindly ask him to call?" he says, as he takes up his hat before leaving.

"With pleasure; the doctor is always anxious to do his duty towards patients, whether they are rich or poor."

"By Jove," thinks Lord Nugent, as he walks back to the Chase, "I begin to see how the land lies. What an idiot I am for not seeing it before; his strange manner to me, her coldness and constraint. Yes, and now I come to think of it she smiles upon him, and seems pleased when he is near her. Can she be a traitress? Oh, no, impossible; the fault, if any, lies with him. By heavens, if I find that he is tempting my darling from her allegiance to me he will have a very heavy reckoning to settle with Ernest Nugent. Fought! he, after all, is only an adventurer, seeking her for the sake of her money. Let him have that if he wants it, so long as he leaves me my damask rose."

Although he had a presentiment that at last he held the key to the problem which had vexed his soul for many a day, yet he could not make up his mind to broach the subject to Sir Arthur or Lady Cresford lest they should turn on poor little Zoe and crush her beneath their just indignation.

"I must save her, my precious rose, at any cost," he murmurs. "It cannot be dishonourable of me to act the part of spy upon one so despicable as he, so lost to all sense of honour and manly principle. He could not have lived here long without hearing of Zoe's engagement to me. For her I can find excuses; he saved her life, and no doubt made that the lever for acting upon her impressionable, romantic nature, but for him there can be none except mercenary motives of the basest kind."

"Nugent, you are the very man I was in search of," says Sir Arthur, laying his hand affectionately on his lordship's shoulder and arousing him from his unpleasant reverie. "I think it is only right that I should tell you of the gossip which is making sport of Zoe's name."

"What do you mean?" he asks, sharply.

"Whoever dares such an outrage will be responsible to me."

"Well, people's tongues will wag, you know, and the poor like to have an opportunity of talking scandal against the rich. It appears that Zoe has been seen walking alone with Doctor Leyton—at least, so it is reported. If I thought she would be guilty of such an indiscretion I should visit her with my severest displeasure, and hound him out of the place. What do you think of it all, Nugent—it concerns you as much as it does me?"

"My worst suspicions are verified," he thinks, the fire of anger burning fiercely in his breast; but he says, with an affectation of scorn,—

"But! people will talk. What harm could there be even should it be true that Zoe and he were seen together; he is her medical adviser, and a friend of the family. I will take the first opportunity of speaking to Doctor Leyton, and if he is the man you and I take him to be he will be careful not to again give a colouring to such baseless reports. Come, Sir Arthur, I wish you to see my new purchase, it only arrived this morning. I mean it as a present for Zoe. I think she will like it; it is free from all vice, and as gentle as a lamb," this as he leads the way to the stables.

It cost Lord Nugent a great effort to say what he did in exculpation of Zoe; but love shielded her against the fierce storm of wrath and indignation which he naturally felt against her and the man who had tempted her to be untrue to her vows.

The dinner at Cressford Chase is over, and a little furtive sigh of relief escapes from Zoe's lips as she rises and follows the ladies from the room, leaving the gentlemen to discuss the day's sport over their claret.

Lady Cressford settles herself in her favourite easy-chair to enjoy her usual after-dinner nap, and taking advantage of this Zoe steals out through the open French windows, and takes a path leading down to the beach, a fleecy wrap covering her shoulders, and a white rose in her raven braids.

"How delicious it is to be out here!" she murmurs; "the house seems stifling, and his presence fills me with constraint."

Dipping her handkerchief into the sea she laves her hot forehead with its cool, refreshing water, and drinks in the soft evening breeze, which comes laden with health and energy.

The night was especially warm for the season, almost oppressively so, and Zoe revelled in the cool shadows of the mighty cliffs, that seemed to throw a protecting shield over her.

Presently a silver arrowy streak is cast upon the heaving waters, and slowly the moon rises from the waste, climbing the azure star-spangled heavens, throwing a wealth of silver sheen over everything animate and inanimate.

"Oh, how beautiful!" she murmurs, "how peaceful! I envy the calm that it sheds around. I wonder if Tracy will come; I long to tell him of the battle I had to-day with Lord Nugent. Heigho! love is a troublesome thing; but yet it brings joy unspeakable in its train."

Some one comes towards her in the moonlight, and her heart flutters with delight as she recognises her lover.

In another moment she is folded to his breast, and warm kisses repay her for her waiting.

"How lovely you are!" he exclaims, rapturously, as he holds the sylph-like form to him, and gazes with all a lover's passionate admiration at the witching, blushing face, lit up by eyes that sparkle with love's electricity.

Zoe Cressford looked a veritable Hebe, a syren emerged from the gleaming waves to entice the unwary down to their treacherous depths.

Her wrap has fallen off, revealing her beautiful neck and arms, models both for a sculptor, her primrose silk rose contrasting well with her dusky eyes and hair.

The wonder would have been if Leyton had not worshipped her, she was so lovely, almost a goddess amongst beautiful women.

They seat themselves on a rock, worn smooth by the action of the waves; and forgetful of everything, even of prudence itself, they enjoy love's sweet converse, and for the time being in a paradise of their own making.

"Yes, it is too true," mutters Lord Nugent, as he sees the lovers seated side by side. "Shall I return and take down my gun and shoot him like a dog?"

The temptation to do this was strong upon him—so strong, in fact, that he had taken several strides towards the Chase before he could overcome it.

"What have I done to deserve this treachery?" he almost gasps, his hands working nervously, his whole frame convulsed with rage. "What is there in him that she admires, even to the sacrifice of her plighted honour? He is poor and untitled, whilst I am rich and a peer."

How vain it was for him to try and plumb the depths of the human heart, which have baffled everyone except the Great Father of all, to whom its secrets are as open as the day at noon!

Many a man would have gone straight to the spot and denounced Tracy in no measured terms, but Lord Nugent was not of that stamp.

He waited until Zoe had left him, and then with bounds rather than steps he confronted his rival, hissing forth,—

"Coward! how dare you tempt my affianced wife from the path of honour. If you want money, gold, take it and go, and do not any longer pollute this place with your presence. Wasn't it a gentlemanly act to steal into a family and—"

"Say no more, Lord Nugent," Tracy cries, with flashing eyes and quivering nostrils. "Have a care, lest I smite the mouth that dares to call me coward. The lady is not yet your wife, or ever shall be. It is pure love that has drawn me to her, such love as you are incapable of feeling. Why, man, I could wrestle with Heaven itself for her; what then do you expect?"

Raising his clenched hand Lord Nugent strikes him a blow full in the breast, and the next moment he himself is lying still and motionless on the strand, his head having come in contact with a large stone, felled like a slaughtered ox by the powerful arm of Tracy Leyton.

All anger vanished from Leyton's breast when he saw the pale face and the still form of his victim, his late assailant.

Kneeling down he unclothes Nugent's cravat, and sprinkled his face with water, murmuring,—

"Great Heaven! what have I done? Is the blood of this man on my soul? Oh! Zoe, you are lost to me for ever."

"I say, master," says a voice at Tracy's elbow, "that was a regular floerer you gave him. Why, he looks as if you had killed him."

"No, no," gasps Leyton, "not that, not that. Go to the Chase and bring assistance. I will await your return, and give myself up to justice if there is any occasion to do so."

The guests hurried down to the beach, headed by Sir Arthur, hardly knowing what to think, for the man who had brought the message did not know the names of either.

"Great Heaven! it's Nugent," exclaims Sir Arthur. "What has happened? Who did this cruel outrage, Leyton?"

"I struck him in self-defence. He quarrelled with me first, but there is no time to be lost in explanations now. He must be taken to the Chase at once."

"Consider yourself a prisoner, Doctor Leyton," says Sir Arthur, severely. "I am a magistrate, and you may yet have to answer a charge of murder."

"He is not dead," says Leyton, eagerly. "I thank Heaven for that; no one more than I can regret this terrible misfortune. Send for

the most skilful physician in the island; for, indeed, he will require his aid. I wish you would permit me to remain with him until other help arrives; his very life may depend upon his receiving prompt attention."

"Certainly not, Doctor Leyton," the Baronet says, firmly. "I will see that he receives every care and attention; you will attend me to the Chase, until a constable can take you in charge."

O! the bitter humiliation of all this, to the proud spirit of Tracy, who had to accompany the party to the home of the woman he loved, there to be branded with the infamy of attempting the life of his rival.

His first thought was of what Zoe would think of it, and then he remembered his poor old mother, and could almost have wept for the bitter anguish his conduct would bring to her.

The matter, as may be easily conjectured, caused a great stir in the neighbourhood, and all sorts of absurd rumours were afloat, one being that the doctor and Lord Nugent had fought a duel on account of Miss Cressford.

"Zoe," says her mother, the following morning, when they were seated alone in her boudoir; "can you throw any light on this unfortunate affair; public rumour connects your name with it?"

"I was not present, mamma," she falters. "Oh, tell me, will Lord Nugent live?"

"Heaven alone knows. Zoe, this is no time for trifling; I ask you whether you have ever had clandestine meetings with Doctor Leyton?"

Covering her face with her hands, the poor girl sobs, brokenly,—

"Yes, and, oh, dear mother, I love him so." "You undutiful child, to bring such disgrace upon our house."

Raising her head, Zoe demands, proudly,— "If to love as noble a man as ever breathed is a disgrace, then I am guilty. Why did not Lord Nugent listen to my pleadings, when I implored him to release me? If he had, this would not have happened. Ernest may die, and Dr. Leyton be ruined for life. Oh! dear mother, do not upbraid me, or I shall go mad. If I have sinned, I am fearfully punished."

Casting herself upon her mother's breast she cries as if her heart would break, and the sight of her grief disarmed Lady Cressford of all anger, for she loved Zoe who was her only child, the one floweret given her by Heaven.

Tracy Leyton was admitted to bail, much to his mother's joy, who had wearied Heaven with prayers for him.

Days passed, nay weeks, and still Lord Nugent lies unconscious, although skilful physicians were attending him.

"What, admit the man here who caused all this?" says the Baronet, in allusion to a visit made by the physician that Doctor Leyton should be called in to consult about the case.

"Yes, Sir Arthur, he is one of the cleverest surgeons we possess. Surely you would not deny him the satisfaction of repairing the injury he has caused. I knew Leyton when he was only a student walking the hospitals, and found him always upright and honourable. Depend upon it, Lord Nugent, if he could speak, would corroborate Leyton's statement. Pardon me for adding that I think it would be better for all parties if this matter were amicably arranged."

The baronet winced under this homethrust, for the papers had hinted that when the trial came on some curious revelations would be forthcoming.

He consented, and Leyton was called in, and justified the prediction of his skill. Within a fortnight Lord Nugent was out of all danger, and the first use he made of returned speech was to exonerate Leyton from blame, and therefore the charge which hung over him was withdrawn.

"What, release my daughter, you say?" says Sir Arthur.

"Yes, I want no unwilling bride; she loves Doctor Leyton, who saved her life and also

THE FAIR ELAINE.

CHAPTER XXVII.

"WHO CAN TELL?"

SIR CHARLES'S kind heart ached for the fair, beautiful woman who had just taken leave of the man who should have interposed himself between her and all evil, instead of trying to crush her and blast her reputation.

She was pale and very sad when she returned to him; her lovely mouth wore a grieved expression, and her eyes an almost hopeless look.

He refrained from speaking to her, but offering her his arm, they passed out of the court-room in silence.

Just outside the door they encountered Senor Froquelin, who had evidently been waiting for his client.

He seemed somewhat disconcerted to see her attended by the chivalrous Englishman, who had so bravely espoused her cause, and his face grew dark with anger as their eyes met.

But he came forward and addressed himself to Arley.

"When shall I call upon the senora for— for a settlement?" he asked, with a sort of shame-faced bravado.

Arley drew herself up haughtily, but before she could reply Sir Charles thundered forth, in the villain's own tongue,—

"Never, you dastard! never dare to approach this lady again, or I will have you arrested on the spot for the vilest perjury of which man was ever guilty. Mind," he added, "I am a man of my word; I am not to be trifled with." And he looked it, too.

The baffled lawyer glared fierce hatred at him from beneath his projecting brows, and thrust his hand into his bosom as if for some weapon, concealed there, with which to wreak vengeance upon the unmasker of his villainy, while he muttered bitter curses upon him.

But Sir Charles appeared not to heed him, though every sense was on the alert, and he passed quickly out of the building with his charge, nor did he leave her until he had conducted her safely to her own door.

"Mrs. Paxton," he then said, "I am going directly for my mother, and we will take you under our protection immediately. These Spaniards are a treacherous, revengeful set, and you have already been the victim of such miserable plots that I do not like to leave you alone another hour. Have you any business outside which needs attention?"

"No," Arley said, "there is nothing to detain me."

"Then may I ask you to pack your trunks, and be ready to go away with us when we come for you?"

"But perhaps Lady Herbert might not be pleased with such an arrangement," Arley replied, with some embarrassment.

"I will answer for that; I know that she will be more than pleased, and my mother and I do not often disagree in our opinions," Sir Charles said, with his genial smile; adding, "so please let me find you ready to leave when I return."

She promised, and he went away with a quick, eager step.

He was actually afraid to allow her to remain there, for he knew well the revengeful nature of the people of that country, and Senor Froquelin's dark looks as they left that court-house warned him that he did not mean to give up his anticipated legal fee, if either fair means or foul could obtain it.

He was back in an hour, as he had promised, and his mother with him.

Lady Herbert was a sweet-faced little woman of about fifty, with a fair, almost girlish complexion, dark, kind eyes, a low, rich voice, and a smile which won Arley's heart at once.

"My dear, Charles has told me of your trouble," was her greeting, as she took Arley

warmly by the hand, then drawing her gently towards her, she kissed her softly on the cheek, for the girl's loveliness took her heart by storm.

Arley's lips trembled at the tender, compassionate tone, and if Sir Charles had not been present she would have bowed her head upon that motherly shoulder and sobbed out all her sorrows to her sympathizing ear.

"I think with him," Lady Herbert continued, seeing that Arley was near losing her composure, "that we must take you away immediately; will you come and travel with us for a few months before going back to England?"

"You are very kind, madam," Arley replied, "and I will gladly do so if I can be useful to you—I could not consent to be a burden."

The pretty matron laughed such a sweet, rare laugh at this.

"A burden, dear," she said. "I should not allow you to be such—you have yet to learn what an exacting little body I am, and I promise you that I shall see that you are kept busy from dawn till twilight."

Arley smiled at this threatening assertion, but she did not believe that it was in her nature to be very arbitrary.

"Now," she continued, "there are a few disagreeable preliminaries which we will dispose of immediately, and with those off our minds we will try to become better acquainted. I paid Miss Preble—my former companion—twenty pounds a quarter, besides travelling expenses, and her duties were to write my letters, read to me—for my eyes are quite weak—and make herself generally agreeable. Now, will that compensation be satisfactory to you? and will you come with me? I want you very much, Mrs. Paxton, more now than I have seen you than I did when my son described you to me."

"I think you are exceedingly kind, and I am very grateful," Arley began, with a suspicious hesitancy, for she knew well enough that the generous woman was actuated more from sympathy for her forlorn situation than her desire to take an entire stranger into such intimate relations.

But Lady Herbert interrupted her half-completed sentence.

"You overestimate the kindness, as you term it, my dear," she said. "I cannot tell you how lonely I have been since Miss Preble left me. I believe we should have given up our trip and insisted upon going home if Charlie had not run across you. He is very nice and kind, and tries to see that I have every comfort—this with a fond glance at her idolised son—but he is a man, and cannot understand all the little notions of a fussy old woman. Ah! I see you mean to come," she continued, as her roving glance rested on Arley's trunks, packed and ready to be strapped. "Charlie, won't you attend to Mrs. Paxton's luggage, while I call up her landlady to settle?"

Arley coloured and laughed.

"There is no need of that," she said, "for she is paid. Your son requested me to be ready to go away when he returned, and I have obeyed him literally. Please accept it as an omen of my future loyalty to yourself."

"That is a good child," madam remarked, more and more delighted with her acquisition, and she emphasised her words with an affectionate little pat upon her shoulder.

"Then I do not see, Charlie, but we are ready to go," she added, to her son. "We will have the coach take us to our hotel, then carry Mrs. Paxton's trunks to the station, while she helps me pack my own. We have thought best," she explained to Arley, "to leave Madrid to-night."

How the girl's heart bounded at this intelligence! How glad she would be to get away from that hateful place, where she had suffered so much; and how thankful to look her last upon those swarthy, dark-browed, fierce-eyed, jabbering Spaniards, and to feel around her the protecting care of a strong, good man, and of a kind, pure woman.

restored me to life, and health, and strength. These are benefits that money cannot requite; if I still retain your friendship, Sir Arthur, let me plead for him; he is a noble fellow, and is sure to make a name in the world. Come, let us repay him by making him and Zoe happy."

A year rolled by, and Tracy stands at the altar with Zoe by his side, in shimmering satin, and lace, her eyes dimmed with tears of joy, inasmuch as she was now the wife of the man she loved to adoration. Her jewels, priceless gems, were the gift of Lord Nogent, who had written Tracy a letter full of good wishes and congratulations.

As the pair walked down the aisle the ocean stands revealed, and bending his head the bridegroom whispers,—

"My darling, I am happy because you are my Sea Queen."

"Yes," she softly replies; "you snatched me from its cruel embraces; let me always be not only your Sea Queen, but, above all, queen of your heart."

"Yes, always, even beyond the grave," he replies, solemnly, as the bells break forth into a joyous peal, the echoes of which seem to float on the waves.

[THE END.]

TO AVOID DROWNING.—It is a well-known fact, says the *Scientific American*, that any person of average structure and lung capacity will float securely in water if care is taken to keep the hands and arms submerged and the lungs full of air. Yet, in most cases, people who are not swimmers immediately raise their hands above their heads and scream the moment they find themselves in deep water. The folly of such action can be impressively illustrated by means of a half empty bottle and a couple of nails, and the experiment should be repeated in every household until all the members—particularly the women and children—realize that the only chance for safety in deep water lies in keeping the hands under and the mouth shut. Any short-necked, square-shouldered bottle will answer, and the nails can easily be kept in place by a rubber band or strings. First ballast the bottle with sand, so that it will just float, with the nails pointing downwards, then by turning the nails upward the bottle will be either forced under the water at once, or will be tipped over so that the water will pour into the open mouth, and down it will go. To children the experiment is a very impressive one, and the moral of it is easily understood. It may prove a life-saving lesson.

A WATER LILY DRESS.—A handsome dress, recently seen, represented a water lily, and is made as follows:—The lower edge of the skirt is finished with knife pleating of most delicate spring leaf green satin; above are plastrons of cream satin cut in the exact shape of calla lily petals, and placed so as to surround the entire skirt, the spaces caused by the undulations of the lily petals being filled with fan pleatings of the green satin like that on the lower edge. The front top finish and hip paniers assume the shape of the lily calyx, while the back drapery falls in leaf form down over the cream petals, resting upon but not concealing them. The corsage and over-drapery are formed of brocade in delicate green, figured with cream and gold calla lilies, combined with green and cream satin in the same domestic textures. The corsage is very odd. The basque portion of brocade has skirts cut front and back in leaf shape, and the waist is closed at the throat and cut out over the bust in calla-lily shape, with appliqued cream petals arranged over fullness of point lace, with lily design. The standing, wide flaring collar, with lower portions of sleeves, are cut like lily petals in cream satin, over full pleatings of cream point lace. The flaring collar is closed with a gold lily pin, with each stamen tipped with a large diamond, while the earrings consist of a single large diamond worn close to each ear. This toilet is particularly noticeable for its great beauty when made up.

There was not the least regret in her heart when she turned her back upon her room and followed her new friends downstairs, even though there had come to her the knowledge that she possessed a rare talent, which would, perhaps, ennoble all her future life, and which she might never have discovered had she not been driven into such extremity. She had learned that she was a heaven-born artist, and she had determined to make the perfecting of this talent the aim of all her future years.

But she felt like a different being as she took her seat beside Lady Herbert in the coach; a great burden rolled from her heart.

She drove with Sir Charles and his mother to their hotel, where she helped them pack their large trunks, and a busy time they had of it to get ready for the evening train.

"I hope," Arley said, while in the midst of their work, "that you are not hastening your departure on my account. I should be sorry to have you lose anything worthy of note here."

Lady Herbert laughed softly. Her companion was considerably at all events.

"Well, dear," she replied, "to be truthful, I shall have to say that we are hastening a little on your account; but at the same time I must confess that I shall begin to get away from this nuisance city. I haven't felt comfortable an hour since we entered this country, and after Charles told me of his encounter with that wretch of a lawyer to-day, I grew very nervous; starting at every sound, and imagining Spanish daggers and poignards waiting at every corner for him."

Arley shivered.

"And perhaps for her too," she thought, as she recalled that fierce flash of anger from Senator Frequella's eyes, after Sir Charles's indignant assertion that she would pay him nothing for his services.

Evening found the Herbert party en route for Toulouse, whence they were to go to spend the remainder of the summer among the Alps.

The wisdom of Sir Charles's move in thus leaving Madrid with all possible dispatch may be shown from the fact that when the shadows of evening had deepened into night a city carriage was driven slowly and noiselessly to the door of the house where Arley had lodged.

A tall figure alighted from it, and after conversing a moment or two with someone who appeared to be inside, mounted the steps and rapped upon the door.

He was kept waiting some time, at which he became very impatient, muttering in a low, fierce tone at the delay; but at length steps were heard, and then the door was unlocked and opened.

In his blundering tones the man inquired for Senator Paxton, though he kept his hat slouched before his face, and his cloak closed up to his chin.

When told that the senator had gone, he burst into a perfect torrent of imprecations; then, appearing to doubt the woman's word, he insisted upon being conducted to the room which she had occupied.

The landlady threw wide the door and bade him enter, and, leading the way upstairs, she showed him into Arley's room.

It was very evident that the pretty bird had flown, for there was no sign of trunks or luggage of any kind; the bed was stripped of its clothing, and the curtains removed and sent to the laundry to make ready for another occupant.

"Where has he gone?" the man demanded, harshly, while he bent a scrutinizing glance upon the woman's face, as if he thought she might be an accomplice in Arley's flight.

"She did not know," she replied, a senator and senator had come there about the middle of the afternoon, and she had gone away with them, taking everything that belonged to her. She had settled her bill, and she said, with an air of delight, had made her handsome present besides, and was just the loveliest and sweetest senator in the world.

The baffled man turned angrily from the garrulous creature and retraced his steps—they were not light ones either—to the carriage.

Here he held a short consultation with its other occupant, then entered it himself and was driven away.

Yes, Sir Charles Herbert was wise in taking her immediately away, for thus, perhaps, a dark deed was averted—who can tell?

But as for the object of all this intrigue, she was safe, and happier than she had been at any time since her marriage.

She was being whirled away over mountains and dell, into wild and rugged gorges, through deep, gaping, black-mouthed tunnels, but a feeling of restfulness and freedom was making her heart light, and smoothing the lines of care from her brow with every speeding hour.

How kind the pretty little matron was! how thoughtful Sir Charles both for his mother and herself!—so chivalrous, so attentive—not contentedly so, but by a thousand little acts and words betraying the nobility of his nature.

If Philip Paxton had been such a man! If he had possessed a tithe of the manliness, truth and honor which was manifested in Sir Charles Herbert's everyday life, how supremely happy she would have been—how gladly, with how much pride she would have devoted all her life and energies to him!

She could not help drawing these comparisons, and wondering why—she did not murmur—she was trying to think that Heaven knew best, and she was so thankful to have found this refuge—she should have been shorn of all that goes to make most women so happy and content, and her life allowed to become so barren and desolate.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

PHILIP PAXTON'S RETURN.

For a time we must leave our fair wanderer, and go back to our friends at Hazelmead.

Poor Lady Elaine!—sweet but heart-broken Lily of Modena!—to her, also, it seemed as if "hope was dead, and life was vain."

She could not at first believe the terrible news that had come to them from across the broad Atlantic; she could not believe that Wil—tender, noble Wil Hamilton—was dead; was lying cold and mangled, upon the cruel rocks of some far-off abyss, or worse yet, his crushed and mangled body devoured by some ravenous beast of the forest.

"She would not have it so," she had said, in the first frenzy of her grief; but there were those dead words, written so plainly and legibly by Major Powell's secretary. He had been seen to fall over the precipice, they had heard his cry of horror as he felt himself slipping over the dizzy height, and when they had hastened with all possible speed, by a circuitous path, to the depths of the canyon, where they believed they should find him, mangled and dead, he was nowhere to be seen.

They found the spot where he had fallen, for there were traces of blood there, and near by his hat lay, caught among some bushes, while a little further on they found a handkerchief with his initials marked upon one corner.

How Lady Elaine moaned as she read this! she had bought those handkerchiefs—the finest and sweetest of linen—and marked those initials with her own hands.

It was useless, then, for her to say she could not believe it—that she "would not have it so;" the evidence was altogether too conclusive, the report too authentic.

For many days she lay upon her bed, her head covered, her hands pressed tightly over her eyes, as if to shut out some horrible sight, or the fierce growling of the greedy beast, which, glowing over his prey, had, she believed, dragged her loved one to its lair and devoured him, thus literally wiping out every trace of him from the face of the earth.

It seemed as if she could not live and bear

it—as if she had neither strength nor inclination ever to rise again and battle with her misery.

But when she began to realize how crushed and broken poor Sir Anthony was, with all his fondest hopes blasted by the loss of his only son and heir; when she looked into that heart-broken mother's agonised face, she felt as if a great duty lay before her, as if it belonged to her to put aside her own bitter grieving, and devote herself to them, and strive, in some measure, to fill the place of the dear one whom they had lost.

And so she meekly took up this cross—it was no light one either—and, little by little, she won those wretched parents from the hopeless despair that seemed likely to annihilate their reason.

She won them to listen to her while she read to them; she coaxed them to drive or walk with her; to play at chess or backgammon, and sought by every possible device to keep them occupied and interested, so that they need not continually brood over and rebel against the ways of One who gives, and who has a right also to take.

Thus the months went by until the anniversary of Annie Hamilton's marriage came round.

It was such a sad, sad day.

Even Lady Elaine, submissive as she had been of late, had not strength to go through it without betraying something of her bitter grief.

As she looked back and remembered how supremely happy they had been on that bright morning; how handsome Wil had looked; and how fondly he had drawn her hand close to his heart, as they were passing out of the church after the ceremony, and whispered tender words which had made her cheeks glow and her pulses bound, the contrast with the present seemed almost unendurable.

Every little while she would have to shut away by herself, or there was such a wretched, sickening pain at her heart, that it seemed as if she must shriek aloud.

Then, when out of the sight and hearing of everybody—out of doors under the trees where none but Heaven could witness her momentary weakness, she wrung her fair hands in her anguish, and looking up helplessly into the sky, cried aloud—

"Oh! Wil—Wil! I cannot, cannot bear it; it is too cruel to be true! Where are you, my beloved? What are you? Give me, oh! give me some sign that in the spirit you are near me, that you can look upon me and know how desolate I am. Send some influence, some messenger of light to comfort me, and to lift, if but for one moment, this crushing weight from my heart!"

But there came no answer to her prayer.

The sky was just as beautifully blue, as pitilessly cloudless and serene as if there was no such thing as sorrow and suffering beneath its azure arch. The birds sang on as gaily, the flowers waved their bright heads just as carelessly, and everything in nature so fresh and beautiful seemed but to mock at her grief.

Then she hid herself in her own room, and shut out, as far as she was able, all this beauty and gladness of the earth; but the stillness and gloom were tenfold more oppressive, and the poor girl was thankful when the day was done, and the shades of night had shut out all the mocking brightness, and the joyous birds sleepy and voiceless to their nests; and a soft, sweet breeze came sweeping up from the lake to cool her heated brow and relieve, in a measure, the fever which had burned in her veins, and the sense of suffocation and oppression which she had experienced all day long.

As soon as she had seen Lady Hamilton comfortably in bed—for she always attended her now—when she retired, leaving a soft kiss upon her lips, and a sweet good-night in her ears, that was infinitely comforting to the mother's aching heart, she quietly stole out of doors again, and wandered off towards the

lake, thinking that the sound of the water, as it softly lapped its shores, might soothe her.

She had nearly reached it when, with a sad, soothing noise, a stiff breeze swept over its surface, bringing to her the fragrance of a hundred lilies—of those dying lilies which do not shut away their hearts at night.

She stopped like one who had been suddenly stricken with mortal pain.

She turned with a bitter moan, and, clasping her hands over her aching heart, fled back to the mansion as if she had been pursued by some relentless spirit of evil.

That breath from the lilies had recalled the evening when Wil had brought her that beautiful one which he has found, and accepting it as a favourable omen, had sought her, and almost given expression to his love.

She would never forget how handsome he had looked; nor the smile that was on his lips, and the tender light in his eyes, when his father had suddenly come upon them, interrupting the blissful interview.

With trembling steps, and the bitterness of death in her heart she sought her own room, struck a light, and going to a corner where stood a flay ebony table, upon which, covered with a glass case, there was a silver vase containing a single pure and perfect lily. She knelt there before it, the tears falling like rain over her colourless face.

"Oh, Wil, my beloved," she sobbed; "wherever I go, whithersoever I turn, there is something that speak of the blessed past, and mocks at the bitter present. Can I ever have courage and strength to live out my allotted time in such misery? I try to look up and beyond; to say humbly, 'it is well—it is right, or it never would have been;' but this self—the pain is the same."

Such grief could not endure long, and at length exhausted by the storm of sorrow that had swept over her, the fair mourner slept, and thus the bitter day came to an end.

Something like unto it was the anniversary of Arley Wentworth's wedding-day, but the trial was not quite so severe.

They all remembered it; and spoke of Arley, wondering where she could be; and if her life was as bright as she had anticipated.

Lady Elaine had not heard from her for a long time—not since she had written her letter of condolence upon learning of their sad movement at Massacre, and was ignorant of her whereabouts at the present time. She had never felt very confident of Arley's happiness, and hence so during the last few months, for there had been a restraint wholly unnatural to her in her letters.

Arley had, indeed, been very reserved, never alluding in the slightest way to her troubles, nor referring to her straitened circumstances. Her epistles were mostly descriptive of the places which she visited and the interesting things she saw, while she always aimed to write in a cheerful strain, for she desired to have her friends even suspect that her marriage had been such a miserable failure.

But, in spite of her assumed cheerfulness, and the often humorous strain of her letters, Lady Elaine mistrusted that all was not well with her. She never mentioned her husband, and no happy wife would be guilty of such an omission as this, she thought, while she had no faith whatever in Philip Paxton. She had never had any confidence in him after his proposals to her and what had followed. She could not forget his conversation with her after learning of her engagement to Wil, nor how deeply he had looked and talked about the friend who had trusted him so fully.

Then his own engagement to Arley happened, and soon after did not look right to her at all.

Her love and admiration for Arley, however, had increased tenfold upon learning how truly she had relinquished all right and title to everything which hereafter she had prized so highly—name, home, and fortune—though she knew that the high-spirited girl must feel this loss keenly, as well as the tantalizing

mystery which hung over her birth and parentage.

Still she knew that all these things would be of comparatively little account if she were happy in her husband's love.

Another reason for this fear and uneasiness was in their protracted sojourn abroad. They had intended at first being absent only three or four months, and now a year had elapsed, and nothing was said about their return; and taking into consideration Arley's loss of fortune and Philip's unfortunate speculations, which Wil had confided to her, she felt quite sure that something was very wrong.

Late in November it became necessary for Sir Anthony to go up to London for a month or so on business. He could not make up his mind to go alone; he clung to his wife now almost as a child clings to its mother, while Lady Elaine had become a sort of necessity to them both—so he insisted upon their going as a family.

They took rooms at the Langham, for they all shrank from occupying their town house, since every room contained so much to remind them of poor, lost Wil, and would only serve to open their wounds afresh.

One day Lady Hamilton and Lady Elaine drove out to Kew Gardens, just for the ride, for they could not give up their customary exercise even though they were in that dense city.

On their return, Lady Hamilton passed into the hotel, while Lady Elaine remained behind to settle with their driver.

It took some little time to make the change and arrange for another drive the following day; but at length it was all settled, and Lady Elaine turned to follow her companion.

Just as she entered the vestibule she encountered a gentleman, but would have passed him unnoticed, if he had not raised his hat and bowed low to her.

Then she raised her eyes, with an inquiring look, and saw Philip Paxton gazing down upon her.

"Mr. Paxton!" she cried, in surprise, while her face lighted with pleasure; for she thought, as he had returned, Arley of course had come with him, and their former friendship would be renewed.

He, however, mistook both her look and tone as indicating her pleasure at seeing him, and holding out his hand, he greeted her most cordially.

She seemed more lovely than ever to him, though her face was very sad, and worn, and pale, while, of course, her deep mourning added to the delicacy of her complexion.

He had not thought of seeing her in black, and it gave him an uncomfortable sensation; it reminded him unpleasantly of Wil, and his treachery toward him, and it is never agreeable to be obliged to recall one's own misdeeds.

"When did you return?" Lady Elaine inquired, reading his face with clear, keen eyes, and finding there something to dislike more than ever.

"Last week," he answered.

"And Arley—your wife?"

"I have no wife," he returned, briefly, and with darkening face.

"Mr. Paxton! Surely Arley has not died, and the sad news been kept from me!" cried the fair girl in a breathless tone, and putting out her hand to steady herself against the wall.

"No, she is living and is well—or was, the last I knew," Philip said, while his own lips were not quite steady, "but—Lady Elaine, there has been a—separation."

His companion gave him another glance of surprise, mingled with horror.

She was too deeply moved—too astounded to speak one word in reply to this dreadful intelligence.

"You look surprised," Philip said, feeling very uncomfortable beneath those searching blue eyes, "and I do not wonder; we have had a sad time since leaving England, but—I do not like to speak of it here," he added, glance-

ing around as if he feared that some one might overhear them. "May I come and tell you about it this evening?"

"Yes, you may come," Lady Elaine returned, and then with a dazed, wondering look in her fair face, she bowed, left him, and went up to her room.

"What can it mean, and where is my poor Arley?" she asked herself, over and over again.

Philip Paxton was well pleased with the permission she had given him. She had granted it unhesitatingly, and he accepted it as a good omen, while the expression of pleasure with which she had greeted him lingered in his memory all day.

He had learned almost immediately upon his return that the Hamiltons were at the Langham, and Lady Elaine with them, and he had haunted the place every day, hoping to encounter Sir Anthony and get an invitation to call, as he had not quite courage sufficient to do so without one.

He presented himself at their door on this evening as early as etiquette would permit, and was delighted to find Lady Elaine alone.

"A great sorrow has come to you since I last saw you," he said, as he greeted her, and holding her hand a moment longer than was necessary while he looked down into her eyes with an expression of tender respect and sympathy.

She drew back from him, lines of pain settling about her sweet mouth, her face growing almost ghastly with the effort she made for composure.

She merely bowed her head in token of assent; her grief was still too fresh to admit of her speaking of Wil with any degree of calmness, while she felt that she could not discuss her sorrow with him under any circumstances.

She motioned him to a seat, and then sat down near him.

"Where did you leave Arley?" she asked, anxious to learn the fate of her friend.

"I did not leave her at all—she left me at Madrid, Spain, and I have not seen her since," he answered, with compressed lips.

Lady Elaine lifted her bright head with a quick, almost impatient motion at this, and bent a keen, inquiring glance upon him, as if to warn him that she did not mean to believe anything wrong of her friend if she could help it.

"Arley and I were never suited to each other," Philip resumed, with a regretful (?) sigh, "and it was a great mistake that we were ever married. We both found that out before a month had passed."

"Why did Arley leave you?" Lady Elaine asked, with those penetrating eyes still fixed upon his face.

It was exceedingly uncomfortable; he wished she would not look at him so; it made it very difficult for him to tell his story in the way he had planned to.

"Because"—he hesitated, as if pained and embarrassed to be obliged to speak of Arley in any such way—"because of my poverty. Perhaps you do not know that I lost very heavily about the time of our marriage, but such is the fact, and that misfortune, together with the loss of Arley's money, made things very awkward for me. Of course, crippled as I was, I could not afford to give her all the luxuries to which she had been accustomed, nor gratify every extravagant whim. We had some words about it in Paris first, and matters grew worse and worse until they finally reached a climax in Madrid. There she utterly refused to live with me in the way we were living, and left me in a passion."

Still Lady Elaine's clear eyes rested upon his face, as if she doubted his false tongue, and longed to read the hidden secrets of his heart.

"Pray, how could such a step improve her condition, if she had no means of her own to live upon?" she asked.

"You are her friend. I do not like to pain

you by talking against her, especially when she is absent and cannot defend herself," Philip returned, with an appearance of honour, though he averted his guilty eyes and a dark flush mounted to his brow. "Perhaps," he added, after a pause; "I had better leave all explanations until she returns—if she ever does. I can only say that she conducted herself in such a manner that I felt justified in applying to the court of Madrid for a divorce."

"Mr. Paxton! did you do that?" Lady Elaine asked, her eyes beginning to flash.

"I did," he replied, firmly; "and Arley, I afterwards discovered, left Madrid the very day that the court rendered its verdict, and in company with a young Englishman who had acted as her companion in the case, and with whom she was upon terms of intimacy."

"But what did she do that you should feel justified in adopting such extreme measures?" Lady Elaine persisted in a constrained tone, while a small red spot began to burn upon either cheek.

"She deserted me in the first place, and then upon watching her I discovered that she made appointments with a person in Madrid, and received money from him—you asked how she procured means for her support—while her intimacy with this Englishman capped the climax."

Lady Elaine arose; she would listen to nothing more.

"Mr. Paxton," she began, coldly, "I believe I know Arley more intimately than almost any one else, for a very tender friendship sprang up between us while we were at Hazelmere; but, in spite of your apparently orminating facts, I cannot believe her to be guilty of the wrongs of which you accuse her. I know that Arley was true to the core—that she was pure and honourable in every thought; I know, too, that she loved you, with a deep and tender love, at the time of your marriage—she confessed it to me when I questioned her, fearing for her happiness."

"Fearing for her happiness!" interrupted Philip, with well assumed surprise, though he knew well enough what she meant.

"Yes, after what had passed between you and me," Lady Elaine went on, with burning cheeks; "and then learning of your pecuniary troubles, I could not help attributing an unworthy motive to you when you sought an engagement with Arley so soon. So I questioned her very earnestly, and had she not betrayed so deep and unmistakable an affection for you I should have felt it my duty to tell her of your previous proposals to me, for I loved her too dearly to be willing that she should be won just for her money."

"Lady Elaine, surely you cannot mean to imply that I—" Philip began, in an indignant tone, but she stopped him with a motion of her hand, while her lips curled slightly as she continued,—

"There is an old saying that man is assumed to be innocent until he is proved guilty. What you have told me about Arley is dreadful, but it is simply impossible for me to believe her to be anything save a good and noble woman without more positive proof than you bring me. The very fact of the stand which she took regarding Ina Wentworth and the fortune which she had always believed to be hers goes to show how sensitive she was about committing any wrong—how strictly conscientious she was upon every point, and I cannot think that she would prove false to her solemn vows to you. Mr. Paxton, I am afraid you have done Arley a great wrong by obtaining this divorce."

Philip Paxton's eyes flashed beneath her drooping lids. He had intended to convey the impression, if he could do so, without telling a downright falsehood, that he had succeeded in obtaining a divorce, and it seemed that she understood it so.

He had been fearfully disappointed and angry at falling in this scheme, and if ever a poor man was heartily cursed Sir Charles Herbert had been for his interference, though Philip had no idea who he was.

He had not wished to bring the matter into English courts on account of the scandal which it would create, but there was no help for it now, if he desired to be free; and he had determined to set about it immediately, and while the suit was pending he meant to make the most of his time and win the Lady Elaine if possible, although her attitude towards him, in this his first interview with her, was anything but encouraging.

(To be continued.)

ABOUT THE HAIR.

To have beautiful hair and keep it in health requires as much care as the teeth, nails or face.

So many twist the hair up in some becoming fashion the year round, and wonder that it goes streaked, thin in spots, and seems harsh and dry.

The hair should be loosened every night before retiring, combed free from all tangles with a bone comb (rubber combs have done much to split and break the hair—nearly all have too much electricity to use rubber); then use a stiff brush for a long time, brushing from the top to the very ends.

It is well for the lady who has a maid, for it is impossible to properly brush one's hair if very long. Then braid and fasten the ends with soft silk braid for the night.

The scalp should be kept clean and healthy; wash occasionally, and have it thoroughly shampooed two or three times a year as well.

To wash, braid the hair loosely in several braids, take a raw egg and rub thoroughly into the scalp (if beaten first it rubs in better); then rinse in cold water with a little ammonia incorporated in it, wring the braids in a coarse towel, sit by a fire or in the sun until dry, then comb out the braids.

The braiding prevents much snarling.

The hair is worn in a Grecian twist, with short curls at one side, or a soft, short twist, more like the old-fashioned French twist, with the ends plaited and put around it.

The figure eight is a favourite style of coiling the back hair, and curls, both long and short, and seems destined to be in style again.

The front hair is dressed in bangs and crimped waves, the latter, for elderly ladies, in soft fluffy, short curls, and in tiny curls, that look more like a baby's head after the bath. But few ladies nowadays crimp and curl their own hair—in fact, many of them have none to arrange.

The patent arrangements for the front carry out the fashioning of all the latest styles, and cannot be detected.

Where one's hair is thin a quinine lotion will prevent its falling out and give life to the roots.

The Parisian fashions for dressing children's hair are as follows: Ringlets are most favoured for babies. Little boys have curls in the back and bangs in front.

Little girls have their hair waved and falling down the back, with a coloured ribbon to keep it in place. Some young girls have revived the fashion of light hair-nets with large meshes, in which the hair falls loose and as low down as the middle of the back.

This style shows the hair to great advantage and will probably meet with general approval.

From sixteen to seventeen years of age the hair is worn high and twisted on the top of the head.

With this method of arranging the hair round hats have no elastic, so as not to conceal any part of the pretty waves which the hair forms when thus raised from the nape of the neck. The hat is fastened to the hair by a steel pin with a shell or jet head.

A FALSE friend is like a shadow on a dial; it appears in clear weather, but vanishes as soon as a cloud approaches.

PASHA.

It was very foolish of Mr. Peppers to think he could keep Jessica from falling in love, and other people from falling in love with Jessica—she was altogether too pretty for that. Just seventeen, with a round, rosebud face, a wealth of dark brown hair, and the sweetest temper in the world. It was a sight to see her upon her weather-beaten choleric old father's arm on the way to church.

He looked like a thunder-cloud which had captured a sunbeam; or, as the young men irreverently said—a pompous old turkey cock escorting a dove.

He glared about to the right and left, snorting defiance at admirers, so that the sunbeam glowed and the dove fluttered under very difficult circumstances. But there she was, in spite of the peculiar paternal oppression, the brightest, sweetest creature you can imagine; and with a native bit of coquetry about her, too, that made even the lifting of those curling, dark lashes extremely perilous to the masculine hearts so plentiful about her. Calford was full of young men.

There was a college, and a naval academy, and a pianoforte manufactory there; then Calford was headquarters for artists—the scenery was so beautiful. And it chanced that there were few young ladies in the town.

Peter Peppers was a widower. He had browbeaten his little wife to death when she was very young. She had left him two daughters—Rebecca, who was made of the same harsh material as her father, and Jessica, who was exceedingly like what the mother had been. There was no danger of any one falling in love with Rebecca—or Becca, as she was called.

Her tart and puckery countenance carried terror to the stoutest masculine heart, and she was left withering on the stem, in her thirty-second summer. Her father found in her a spirit equal to his own, but they both agreed in keeping a strict watch upon Jessica. Yet, in spite of continual scolding and fault-finding, Jessica continued to be as happy as a bird. She had youth and hope on her side, and she could hardly fail to go abroad without getting a hint of her power.

Jessica had been allowed the privilege of an intimate friend, a very sweet girl, afflicted with lameness, named Olive Allys; but Olive's two brothers came home from sea, and this intimacy was interdicted by Mr. Peppers.

Jessica went no more to visit her friend.

To do Mr. Peppers justice, he was very fond of Jessica, and proud of her. He knew she was charming and good, and, without much forethought, he determined to keep her to himself.

But fate and Mr. D'Albert were too much for Mr. Peppers's intentions.

Mr. D'Albert was principal of the naval academy. He saw Jessica, and then meeting her again at a church party, asked his landlady for an introduction to her.

Mrs. Japonica hesitated, declaring: "Actually, I daren't. Mr. Peppers wouldn't like it."

"But I should," laughed Mr. D'Albert.

"Mr. Peppers never allows gentlemen to pay attention to Jessica. If it were Becca, now, the case would be different."

"It's not Becca. I wouldn't kiss Becca for fifty pounds."

"Mercy! Well, when you get a chance to kiss Jessica, let me know."

"I will."

Mr. D'Albert went away and found some more daring soul to introduce him to pretty Jessica.

He stood by her side some ten minutes, saying the usual pleasant nothings of society, admiring the smiling red mouth and dimpled cheeks, and guessing at the length of the curling dark lashes, when Mr. Peppers, discovering the situation, with a portentous putting up of his under lip, hastened upon the scene, and

frowning heavily into Mr. D'Albert's handsome face, drew Jessica away.

Mr. D'Albert's quiet smile told that he understood the situation, and looked on laughed, but no one guessed the end of this beginning.

Mr. D'Albert did not guess it himself until weeks had flown, and he had somehow accumulated a vast deal of information concerning the Peppers.

Then he became acquainted with Olive Allys, and the latter spoke of her friend with enthusiasm.

"If I were a young man," concluded Olive excitedly, "I'd fall in love with Jessica, and run away with her. She is so bright and pretty, and she never gets taken out for a concert, or a ride, or a sail, as the other girls do. They keep her as close as a nun, and will until she's dried to parchment, like Becca. I don't see how Jessica bears it—I don't!"

Mr. D'Albert had spells of deep thought after this conversation, especially on learning that the only place where Jessica was allowed to walk of a Sunday evening was in the cemetery. From his window it chanced, too, that he could see the back garden where Jessica sewed and read, and tended her plants and canary, and daily his respect and interest deepened. He had half-a-dozen merry, joyous young sisters at home, and dwelt on the contrast.

Now it happened that Jessica thought as much of Mr. D'Albert as Mr. D'Albert thought of Jessica.

She knew his window in Mrs. Japonica's pretentious boarding-house: knew his horse when he galloped past her father's door; knew—at least, knew well enough where the lovely flowers came from, which sometimes reached her.

Olive Allys had a beautiful garden, and Becca thought Olive sent them, but Jessica knew well enough that the choice and costly selection came from an unexpected quarter.

Mr. D'Albert's glance said as much whenever she chanced to get a bow from him; and if she blushed vividly, who can wonder? She could not think of one objection against Mr. D'Albert as a lover, nor, in reason, could Mr. Peppers. He was every inch a gentleman.

It was very accommodating of Becca to fall ill. She was not painfully ill, only very sorrowful, and unable to drive all before her in the household; so that she was exceedingly cross, and Jessica had a harder time than usual at home.

The doctor ordered a change of scene.

"I'd send you down to the seaside, and Jessica might go with you to take care of you," said Mr. Peppers. "There's too many young men here. I notice that naval fellow lifting his hat to Jessica. But there's always boarders at the seaside in summer, and a great deal of foolishness going on."

"We could go to Mrs. Green's," said Becca. "Nobody ever goes there."

They could, and did—Mr. Peppers first ascertaining that Mrs. Green had no lodgers, and making her promise that she would take none while his daughters remained with her.

It was a forlorn old place—isolated enough, but comfortable and clean within, and with plenty of sea-air.

Any change was a delight to Jessica, and she climbed the rocks and plashed in the surf, with her cheeks like roses and her eyes bright as jewels.

"Laws!" said Mrs. Green, "see that girl enjoy herself. Ain't she a beauty? It does my heart good to look at her! She'll marry early—you'll see."

"Indeed she won't!" snapped Becca. "We've other intentions."

"Man proposes, but God disposes," replied Mrs. Green, as she rattled her knitting-needles.

Invalidism compelled Miss Becca to be a late riser. Jessica usually had a sea-bath and a run in the morning air before her sister came down.

One morning, as she was tripping across the door-yard, her attention attracted by a dog-

kennel, and a great Russian boar-hound rose up and looked at her inquiringly.

Jessica started, her bright eyes widened; then she looked inquiringly around. But there was no one but the dog and herself in the yard, and as he wagged his tail invitingly and looked kind, in spite of his deep mouth, she drew near and patted his great head.

Jessica liked animals, especially large dogs and horses. This dog wore a handsome collar, with his name marked upon it—"Pasha;" also his owner's name.

Jessica trembled a little as she read the letters. Her cheeks burned too. Then she heard Mrs. Green's voice through the open window.

"Yes, Miss Peppers, I've taken a dog to board. No harm in that, I hope. Your pa couldn't have no sort of objection to him. I didn't take his master."

"No!" snapped Miss Becca. "I hope you didn't take a man into the house!"

"He wanted to, though. He was a stranger, but nice and pleasant-looking, and I'd taken him but for my promise to your pa. He went to the hotel, I suppose, 'bout two miles below here."

What made such a swarm of dimples creep over Jessica's satiny cheeks? It seemed to her the brightest morning she had ever known, though Becca came out and scolded her for dampening her feet and running out bare-headed.

How the sea glittered!—how the waves raced upon the beach! How sweetly the little beech-birds, swinging among the tall marsh grasses, whistled and called!

Miss Becca came out.

"See what a nice dog, Becca!" said Jessica, timidly.

Becca examined the great fellow with her eyeglass, while Jessica trembled.

"I suppose the great creature might be of service to us, in case we should meet—a man—in our walks," she said.

"He's very kind," said Jessica.

It was soon apparent that Pasha would follow her anywhere. He would stalk contentedly at her side, and when she sat down among the rocks, lie down at her feet, with his head upon her little shoe. He evidently grew very fond of Jessica, and Jessica was very fond of Pasha.

One day they were under the cliffs.

"Hark!" said Becca. "What's that?"

It was somebody who was whistling, very clearly—

"A fox jumped over the parson's gate."

"A man!" said Miss Becca. "If he comes here, I'll set the dog on him!" she added, fiercely.

A handsome man, somewhat under thirty, came around the rocks; then paused suddenly, lifting his hat.

Becca had no time to set the dog upon him. Pasha was off like a shot, yelping with delight. He leaped up, planting his great forepaws upon his master's breast, and lapping his face.

"Down, down, Pasha! old fellow! Pardon, ladies! Misses Peppers, I am sure! I am sure I cannot be mistaken; and perhaps you remember my face—D'Albert, of Calford. I have been at the naval academy for the past year, and know your respected father well. You are seeking your health down here, Miss Peppers? Ah, and find it! You are looking finely."

Few men had ever been brave enough to compliment Becca. Perhaps that is why she mentioned the sex so tartly. Be that as it may, she forgot Jessica, and received Mr. D'Albert very civilly.

He was staying at the Oliver Hotel. Pasha was his property. He was on his way to Mrs. Green's, to pay the dog's bill.

The four walked down the sands together. Miss Becca did not see anything suspicious in the situation.

Perhaps she was a little bewildered at having

a gentleman's arm to lean on, and a gentleman's strong hand to help her over the rocks and gullies.

As for Jessica, who tripped lightly ahead, with Pasha at her side, the sea sparkled brighter, and the waves raced more madly than ever. Her cheeks were like roses, and her eyes like diamonds.

By paying marked attention to Becca, Mr. D'Albert managed to get a word and a glance from Jessica, during his visits, which came weekly.

Mrs. Green stared.

"Well," said Becca, apologetically, "Mr. D'Albert is not like common men."

Certainly he was not, to undertake the prosecution of so difficult a siege.

Demure little Jessica could not but smile at the patience and zeal with which her admirer continued his tactics.

It was a long time before Becca took alarm and guessed the truth.

Mr. D'Albert came to Mrs. Green's on Pasha's account. Pasha's bravery and intelligence was a subject upon which they all agreed.

Then, Mr. D'Albert made their stay at the seaside much pleasanter by frequent sails and rows. He bided his time, and by-and-by could not be shaken off.

He loved Jessica, and Jessica had learned to love him!

Why he should not be her husband Becca could not say, especially as Mr. D'Albert coolly signified his intention of waiting any length of time for her pretty sister.

Becca, who had fled from Calford with Jessica, returned with her, engaged, with her father's consent, to Mr. D'Albert.

Mr. Peppers, taken back by the situation, had weakened, and finally yielded. Pasha also approved.

And at the wedding Mrs. Japonica had her opportunity to see Mr. D'Albert kiss his bride, Jessica.

H. S. K.

PEOPLE do not care to give alms without some security for their money; and a wooden leg or a withered arm is a sort of draftman upon heaven for those who choose to have their money placed to account there.

SINGLE LIFE.—A state of single blessedness has its mischievous side. The mischief of divorce is a mere bagatelle as compared with the harm done by the influences which operate in both sexes to prevent marriage. We do not say to delay, but to prevent; for the alarming fact is not the numbers who delay to marry, but the numbers who believe that they can achieve the ends and the happiness of life better without being entangled in the matrimonial web. This opinion has more prevalence among young men; but it is the other sex who suffer most under its operation. It is not altogether loose and libertine reasoning which lead young men and young women to this conclusion. It may be forced on them by the cogency of special facts in the world's way of thinking. There is a great mass of selfish and worldly convenience and comfort which induces them to take that side at once. There are risks in domestic life which are so great in the higher ranges of society as to take the ignoble look from a young man's selfish cowardice. The public discussion of woman's position and prospects have drawn the sexes apart in feeling and in antagonistic interests. Wedded life is less attractive to young men. Its promise does not seem to equal its burdens. The young women, on their part, are frightened by the dismal picture spread before them. Maternity, the crown and glory of their sex, is dishonoured; and, while on the one hand they have been morbidly informed of its costs and its perils, they have little but the dictates of their own nature to encourage them to assume its burdens or to reward them with the honour they deserve for having done so.

FACETIÆ.

A certain boy was asked by his uncle if he wanted some flowers, and replied, "I don't care if I do." The uncle said, "I never give flowers to boys who don't care." Whereupon the urchin responded: "I don't care if I do, but I do care if I don't."

"Did you know papa when he was a boy?" asked a Somerville urchin of his mother, as she doled him out half a dozen strawberries at table. "Why, what a question, child! Certainly not. I didn't know your papa until he was a young man. Why do you ask?" "Oh, 'cause I wanted to know," "What for?" "Cause you give him more strawberries than you do me, and you've known me ever since I was born."

A *sermon*, whose content it was to indulge in very long sermons exchanged with one who always preached short ones. At about the usual time for dismissal, the audience began to go out, until nearly all had left, when the sexton, who had stood it as long as he could, walked up to the pulpit, and said to the preacher in a whisper: "When you get through look up, will you, and leave the box at my house, next to the church?"

Pastor:—You have not been to church for some time? Member:—Well no, You see, I go to the theatre every Saturday night, and coming out of the hat auditorium into the cold air always gives me such a cold that I have to stay at home all day Sunday to nurse it." Pastor:—Put the question of theatre-going aside; why not, if you will go, select Monday night? Member:—"I ain afraid I might catch cold at church, and that would prevent me from attending the theatre."

"Well," said the proprietor of a seaside resort to his clerk, "it is about time we were thinking about needed improvements." "What are you going to do in that line?" asked the clerk. "Let me see," answered the proprietor, meditatively; "we must air all our mattresses, the kitchen will have to be whitewashed, four or five bath-baths need patching, and there will have to be a new button put on the ladies' bath-house door. It seems to me we are never done with expenses."

"Are you as happy now as you were before you married?" asked Mrs. Yeast of young Mrs. Johnson. "Yes, indeed," replied the lady, "and a great deal happier." "That is strange," suggested the philosopher's wife. "Not at all strange," came from the young married woman. "You see, before I was married I used to spend half of my time worrying about what dress I should wear when Daniel called." "But don't you try just as hard to look well when your husband returns home at night?" interrupted Mrs. Yeast. "Well, you see," went on the bride of two summers, "I don't worry any about it now, as I have only one dress to my name."

Doc. Love.—An old lady of his flock once called upon Dr. Gill with a grievance. The doctor's neck-bands were too long for her ideas of ministerial humility, and, after a long harangue on the sin of pride, she intimated that she had brought a pair of scissors with her, and would be pleased if her dear pastor would permit her to cut them down to her notions of propriety. The doctor not only listened patiently, but handed over the offending white bands to be operated upon. When she had cut them to her satisfaction, and returned the bits, it was the doctor's turn. "Now," said he, "you must do me a good turn also." "Yes, that I will, doctor; what can it be?" "Well, you have something about you which is a deal too long, and which causes me no end of trouble, and I should like to see it shorter." "Indeed, dear sir, I will not hesitate. What is it? Here are the scissors—use them as you please." "Come, then, good sister," said the starchy divine, "put out your tongue."

"I'd like to give you a piece of my mind, Mrs. Smiggs," "I would not talk of impossibilities, Mr. Smiggs. The gentleman article you speak of is much too small to be divided."

"No," said Mrs. McGill; "we didn't celebrate All Fool's Day at our house. The squire never pays any attention to legal hollow days; and, as for me, I feel just as foolish one day as another."

FORD WIFE (who has just listened to a new sonnet):—"I think it perfect, my darling; but I'm no judge. You had better read it to Mr. Melnotte, who writes poetry himself." Poetical Husband:—"Not if I know it! Why, before I've quite finished he'll pull out and read a sonnet of his own."

"What did you get out of that case?" asked the old lawyer. "I got my client out of it," replied the young one. "And what did he get out of it?" "Satisfaction, I reckon; I didn't leave anything else for him to get." "Young man," said the senior, proudly; "you'll never be a judge; there is not enough money on the bench for you."

WHERE HE WAS DRY.—An old Scotch lady, on the occasion of an unfortunate minister getting wet to the skin on his way to the church, replied to her companion, who was about to proffer her aid towards drying the garments, "Na, na, woman; ye needna fast yourself; wait ye a wee till he gets into the pulpit, he'll be dry enough there."

A GENTLEMAN one day got so much enraged with his servant that he knocked him down. As Pat lay on the floor senseless, the gentleman went up to him, and, repenting his rashness, said:—"Are you dead or alive, Pat?" "Sure, as that's what I was trying to make out myself; but if it's dead I am, I hope I'll live to see your honour swing for it, for it was an ugly rap ye gave me."

"If we were in California," said a young fop, in company, the other evening; "instead of working in the mines, I would waylay some miner with a bag of gold, knock out his brains, gather up the gold, and run." "I think you would do better in gathering up the brains," quietly responded a young lady. "A man should always secure what he is most deficient in."

REACHING PAR.—The grandmother of a well-known scoundrel having reached the age of ninety-nine years and eight months, feeling very weak one morning, sent for her doctor, and asked him if he thought she would attain the age of one hundred. "Well, madame," he replied, "you may depend upon my doing my best." "Oh, do," replied the old lady; "I should so like to reach par."

A LADY at Bedford, who lives near a church was sitting by the window listening to the crickets, which were loudly chirping, the music from the choir rehearsal being faintly audible, when a gentleman dropped in familiarly who had just passed the church and had the music full in his mind. "What a noise they are making to-night!" said he. "Yes," replied the lady; "and it is said they do it with their hind-legs."

FATHER.—It is Cardinal Manning who relates this incident as having happened to himself: "One night I was returning to my residence in Westminster, when I met a poor man carrying a basket and smoking a pipe. I thought over this Aristotelian syllogism: He who smokes gets thirsty; he who is thirsty desires to drink; he who drinks too much gets drunk; he who gets drunk is lost. This man is in danger of mortal sin. Let us save him. I affectionately addressed him: 'Are you a Catholic?' 'I am, thanks be to Heaven!' 'Where are you from?' 'From Cork, your reverence.' 'Are you a member of the total abstinence society?' 'No, your reverence.' 'Now,' replied I, 'that is very wrong. Look at me, I am a member.' 'Faith, maybe your reverence has need of it!' I left."

"Why, old boy, what is the matter with you? You look as if you had lost your best friend!" "Do I?" was the reply. "Well, I haven't. On the contrary—I have just gained a friend!" "You don't look like it!" "I know I don't. You see, last night I asked little Miss B—— to marry me; and she said she would always be to me a very dear friend."

A YOUNG exquisite, who thought that an eye-glass would improve his appearance, went into an optician's, and was a long time trying to find one to suit him. None of them would do; they were either too strong or too weak for his sight. At length he found one, that was just right; and inquired the price. Surprised at the exorbitant he had made, the optician, after looking at him in blank astonishment, ventured to ask what number of glass he would like for the frames he had picked out.

HOW TO SECURE A JURY.—Some fifty years ago, when a certain colony was busily settling, it was a work of no small difficulty to get a jury together. The court had been forced to adjourn many times from day to day, because the sheriff as often came in and reported an incomplete panel. Finally things came to a crisis. The judge fixed a day beyond which no further forbearance could be exercised. When that day arrived, the enthusiastic sheriff rushed into the court-room, and exclaimed:—"It's all right, your honour; we'll have the jury by twelve o'clock. I've got eleven of 'em looked up in a barn, and we are running the twelfth with dogs!"

"STRANGE, Cicely dear, how you do puzzle in that old, worn-out, *reposé* work." "Why, indeed, I have but just taken it up. I am told it is quite the correct thing." "Oh, dear, no. *Reposé* is passé. The proper idea is all armour, now." "Old armour? Well, I suppose I shall have to pick it up." "Certainly you will, my dear. No home in half-finished with out a helmet, a battle-axe, greaves, gauntlets, coats of mail, and—'" "Ah, that reminds me, Geraldine, a coat-of-mail is just what we are looking for, isn't it?" "Oh, you have no soul for antiquity, no—'" "Give me antiquity, and a bank account together, and see where my soul would go to."

AN ENTHUSIASTIC SOLDIER.—Count de Lippe Birkembourg, one of the bravest and ablest officers of his day (1720—1774), amused himself with military manoeuvres and experiments in his own territories in Germany. One day he invited his little court and visitors to dine with him after a review. The dinner was served in a tent on the ground, and towards the latter end of the repast the count was observed to look several at his watch, and put it up again and call for another bottle. At last some one asked the reason of this. "Why," said he, "I have ordered this tent to be mined by a new method—it is to be blown up at a certain minute, and I am anxious to get out and see the explosion." The tent, it will readily be believed, was cleared, without waiting for the other bottle.

RATHER A COMMON BIRD.—In Brisbane there was a firm of solicitors, by name Little and Brown, and it fell to the lot of these gentlemen, says the author of "The Never Never Land," to send in a bill of costs which the Government had to pay, and over which—as is not uncommon with lawyers' bills—considerable heartburning existed. It chanced that at the time the veto for this Bill was before the House a Bill for the protection of wild birds was also under discussion. In committee room, with much solemnity, an honourable member, at that time recognized as quite the foremost of free lances, and proposed that in the Bill the "lawyer-bird" be included. The House not following the honourable member, he was asked to explain what this bird might be, to which he replied, amidst roars of laughter, "It is little and brown—and it has a very long bill!"

SOCIETY.

The little village of St. Nicholas, near Cardiff, was all astir on the 24th ult., in anticipation of the wedding of Miss Bruce, eldest daughter of Mr. Alan Cameron Bruce, Pryor, of Duffryn, St. Nicholas, by his first marriage with Louisa, only child and heiress of the late Colonel L. H. Shide, 1st Dragoon Guards, granddaughter of Sir John Shide, Maxwell Court, Somerset, and grand-niece of Lord Aberdare, to Chevalier Alessandro Maggolini-Sparangi, Lieut. 1st Regt. Bussolenti, third son of Count Maggolini-Sparangi de Mombrescilli et Belvedere, late Royal Grenadier Guards (Piedmont). Numerous arches of foliage and flowers, with suitable mottoes, were erected all along the route leading to the church.

At half-past eleven the bride arrived, and, leaning upon the arm of her father, walked up the crimson carpeted pathway to the church. She wore an ivory satin dress, trimmed with beautiful Honiton lace; tulle veil and wreath of orange blossoms; with handkerchiefs and fan of Honiton lace. Master John St. Bruce, brother of the bride, aged four, dressed in a Cavalier costume of crimson satin, dashed with white, and braided with gold, carried her train.

The bridesmaids were her sisters, Miss Alice Bruce and Miss Violet Bruce, who were dressed in white Satin with Valenciennes lace, embroidered arabes of pale blue silk, and white lace hats with blue aigrette; each wore a gold brooch, the gift of the bridegroom. Count Carlo Maggolini, eldest brother of the bridegroom, attended as best man. The marriage ceremony was performed by the Rev. W. Bruce (late Canon of Llandaff and great-uncle to the bride), assisted by his son, the Rev. W. C. Bruce, vicar of St. Woolos, Newport. A distinguished company of thirty-six persons sat down to the wedding breakfast, laid out in the spacious dining-room at Duffryn.

The marriage of H. E. Eleanor Musurus Bey, Turkish Ambassador at the Court of Rome, eldest son of H. E. Musurus Pasha, Turkish Ambassador at the Court of St. James, with Mlle. Marie Antoniadou, second daughter of Mr. Jann Antoniadou, of Alexandria, was celebrated, by special licence, at the residence of Mrs. E. Spartali (sister of the bride) in Eaton-square, on the 7th ult.

The ceremony was performed according to the rites of the Greek Church, a temporary altar being placed in the centre of the principal drawing-room. The altar, which was covered with rich damask, was lighted with large wax candles, the candelabra being adorned with lilies and roses. The wedding party assembled in the drawing-room at three o'clock, H. E. Musurus Pasha and Mlle. Musurus, the Greek Minister, Count and Countess Léon Minassietz, Chevalier Catalini, Commander Gallian (Turkish Consul-General at Rome), Mr. Paul Gallian (Consul-General for Turkey), Mr. and Mrs. Warner Heriot, Mr. and Mrs. Spartali, Mr. A. H. Wylie, and a select private party of the nearest relatives and most intimate friends of the contracting couple being present.

The bride, who entered the drawing-room shortly after three o'clock, was attired in white satin; the bodice, which was high to the throat and had a pointed basque, was trimmed down the front with orange blossoms; a fringe of the same edging the tablier, and being intermixed in the trimming of the elbow sleeves; and the long train was finished by a plaiting of satin, having plain spaces at intervals. She wore a narrow wreath of orange blossoms and a long tulle veil, but no jewels.

Mme. Antoniadou, mother of the bride, was dressed in grenat and amber striped Pekin, over a skirt of straw-coloured silk veiled with cream lace; Mrs. Spartali, sister of the bride, wore cream-coloured orpè de Chine; Mrs. Warner Heriot, sister of the bridegroom, mushroom broad silk, trimmed with handsome embroidery.

STATISTICS.

The power developed by the explosion of a ton of dynamite is equal to 45,665 tons raised one foot, or 45,665 foot-tons. One ton of nitro-glycerine similarly exploded will exert a power of 65,452 tons, and one ton of blasting gelatine similarly exploded, 71,050 foot-tons.

SWAN "NICKING" ON THE THAMES.—The Queen's Swanherd and the officials of the Vintners' and Dyers' Companies of the city of London have just concluded their annual excursion upon the Thames for the purpose of marking or "nicking" the swans and cygnets in the reaches of the river between Southwark Bridge and Henley. There were 40 swans and 2 cygnets between London and Ditton, 39 swans and 12 cygnets between Ditton and Staines, 65 swans and 25 cygnets between Staines and Bray, and 123 swans and 24 cygnets between Bray and Henley. The total number of swans was 267 and cygnets 63. Of these the Queen claims 178 swans and 46 cygnets, the Vintners' Company 48 swans and 12 cygnets, and Dyers' Company 43 swans and 5 cygnets.

GEMS.

BETTER three hours too soon than one minute too late.

THE beggar is the only man in the universe who is not obliged to study appearances.

A MAN can frequently polish his boots with better grace than he can polish his manners.

Good taste rejects excessive nicety; it treats little things as little things, and is not hurt by them.

NOTHING makes the world seem so spacious as to have friends at a distance; they make the latitudes and longitudes.

THINKERS are as scarce as gold; but he whose thought embraces all his subject, who pursues it uninterruptedly and fearlessly of consequences, is a diamond of enormous size.

I ALWAYS fancy I can hear the wheels clicking in a calculator's brain. The power of dealing with numbers is a kind of "detached lever" arrangement, which may be put into a mighty poor watch.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

LEMONS.—Lemons will keep good for months by simply putting them in a jug of buttermilk, changing the buttermilk about every three weeks. When the lemons are required for use they should be well dried with a cloth.

FINE ICING.—Whites of four eggs, well beaten, with one pound of powdered sugar, a teaspoonful of arrowroot, one of pulverized and sifted white gum-arabic, juice of one lemon. Flavour to taste.

MEAT FILLING.—Scald and prepare a calf's foot, and put it into a stewpan with one pound of kauchie of veal, two eschaloats, a small bunch of savory herbs, one onion (into which has been inserted two cloves), a lump of sugar, and the thin rind of a lemon, a teaspoonful of salt, and a little pepper and cayenne to taste. Over these pour two quarts of cold water, bring the liquid then to a boil, removing, as it forms, all the scum which rises to the top; simmer for six hours. Run the jelly through a bag and place it aside until cold. Remove gently all the fat and sediment; and pour the gravy into a pie from a hole in the top. If for chicken or ham pie, the neck, bones, and trimmings of the chicken should be stewed with the calf's foot, &c., to which add half a pound of lean bacon or ham. This jelly is better where the pie is to be used cold, but can be put into a hot one if required.

MISCELLANEOUS.

WHAT we call miracles and wonders of art are not so to him who created them; for they were created by the natural movements of his own great soul. Statues, paintings, churches, poems, are but shadows of himself.

If anything is absolutely necessary to make an individual valuable, it is that he should clearly recognize his own powers and walk out his own path in the world. When he finds out that whatever he is to accomplish must be in one direction, and, accepting the discovery, applies his energies absolutely in that line; he has usually laid the foundation of a useful and a happy life.

MARRIAGE IN CHINA.—I had not been at the hotel in Hong Kong five minutes before my attention was distracted by a terrific noise. Rushing to the front balcony I was just in time to see quite a remarkable wedding procession. At first, from the noise and general style of the affair, I thought it was a funeral, but I soon discovered the difference. First came a dozen musicians who were beating gongs and blowing fish horns, each apparently without any reference to the rest. Then followed a company of men and boys bearing flags and lanterns; after which came a series of gilded tables with elaborately carved and painted canopies over them, and all sorts of eatables upon them. The display of fruit was quite tempting, and I longed for a slice of the roast pig and the roast sheep. But there were also native dishes which, by experiment, I found to be far from appetizing. Thus far, everything was arranged just as a funeral procession would be, and was composed of the same features. But now there was a slight departure from the funeral order of things. There came a magnificent sedan chair, the windows of which were thoroughly curtained, but which I was told contained the happy bride. This gorgeous sedan chair was followed by others, also by gaily decorated jinnishas, in which were seated the relatives of the contracting parties. More so-called musicians followed, and the procession wound up with a load of boxes, which, I inferred, contained the marriage offerings, and, perhaps, the trousseau of the bride.

A BRECON INSTITUTION.—The fair was peculiarly popular with the working people of England. Stourbridge fair was held in a field near the monastery of Barnwell, about a mile from Cambridge, and for the profit of the corporation of that town. The fair was commenced and concluded with peculiar solemnity: It was opened on the 8th of September, and the business was continued for three weeks. The space allotted to the fair, about half a square mile, was divided into streets, which were named sometimes by nations, and in each of these streets some special trade was carried on, the principal being foreign spices and fruits, ironmongery, fish, metal goods, cloth, wool, leather, and hatter's tools. Purchasers frequented Stourbridge fair even from the vicinity of London, as, for example, from the religious house of Bion. It was as famous in its day as Novgorod or Leipzig. There were few households which were possessed of any wealth which did not send a purchaser or give a commission for Stourbridge fair. To this great fair came the huge woolpacks which then formed the wealth of rural England, and were the envy of surrounding nations. Hither came the produce of the Cornish tin mines, stamped with the sign of the rich earl who had just bought the German empire, though his purchase was only a barren title. Here also bargains were made for the barley of the eastern counties, to be transported; if the price fell low enough, and therefore the law, provided for plenty among the people, permitted the export to the Flemish breweries, which more than two centuries later taught Englishmen to flavour and preserve their ale with hops.

NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

M. D.—A letter addressed to the gentleman named at Bridgeport, Conn., will reach its destination.

C. D.—We cannot advertise the address of any business firm in this page.

F. V. M.—July 17, 1884, fell on Thursday; and April 26, 1882, also fell on Thursday.

F. H.—We know of no drug that will produce any effect in the way described.

R.—We know nothing concerning the party who advertised it.

W. R.—Rusty nail water will sometimes remove freckles when other lotions fail.

S. F.—January 8, 1886, came on Sunday; January 8, 1886, on Saturday.

G. J. J.—Practice daily with tolerably heavy dumb-bells.

A. J. L.—If you have had a fair public school education you need not be apprehensive about passing an examination.

C. R.—We cannot advise the employment of dyes for the hair. The frequent application of castor oil and brandy, together with the daily use of a stiff hairbrush, may have the effect desired—the stoppage the growth of grey hair.

R. V.—Sierra is a Spanish word, originally signifying a "saw" applied to a mountain ridge, which, from its twisted appearance when viewed from a distance, not unfrequently bears a striking resemblance to a saw.

T. L.—To make cement for an aquarium mix three pounds of well-dried powdered venetian red with one pound of oxide of iron, and add as much boiled oil as will make the mixture into a stiff paste.

L. V.—1. Warts may be removed by applying to them a drop of chromic acid. They appear most frequently upon the hands. Their causes are very obscure. If cut or punctured they exude a sort of serum, which applied to the skin is apt to produce others of the same kind. 2. Your handwriting is both pretty and legible.

F. B. B.—Try the subjoined recipe for making lemon ice-cream, the ingredients for which are: one gallon of cream, two pounds of rolled loaf-sugar, and one teaspoonful of oil of lemon. Mix well, place in the freezer (which must be surrounded with powdered ice and rock salt), and agitate until the freezing is completed. For vanilla cream use two eggs, beaten, and one and a half tablespoonfuls of tincture of vanilla. The flavouring essence should always be well mixed with the sugar before it is added to the cream, for this means the latter will all be flavoured alike. In making ice-cream with fruit, mix the juice of the fruit with the sugar before adding to the cream, which need not be very rich. The colour of the flavouring essence (if it has any) is imparted to the cream, no artificial means being employed.

T. C. D.—1. To make a voltaic pile, take disks of copper, zinc, and woollen cloth of any size: soak the cloth in a solution of sal ammoniac, and then pile up the disks in the following order: Copper, zinc, cloth, and so on. The relative position of the copper and zinc in each pair must be observed throughout the whole series, so that if the pile commences with a copper disk it will terminate with a zinc one. These two extremities are known as the poles, since being the positive pole and copper the negative. The outer disks are connected with copper wire, so that the electric current excited in the pile may be conveyed to any place desired. The larger the disks and the greater their number, the more intense will be the current. 2. Get an estimate of the cost of electric bells from a firm in your town.

L. Z.—Tantalus was a character noted in Grecian mythology for the punishment he received in the lower world. Various reasons are assigned for his having to undergo the severe punishment meted out to him, the most common being that he divulged the divine counsels of Jupiter, which the latter had communicated to him as a secret. In the lower world he was afflicted with an insatiable thirst, and had to stand chin-deep in a lake, the waters of which receded whenever he attempted to drink of them. Lucus, a cluster of fruit hung over his head, which eluded his grasp whenever he tried to reach them, his mind at the same time being kept in a state of constant terror lest a huge rock, suspended above his head and ever threatening to fall, should crush him. The punishment which this fabled being is said to have undergone has supplied our language with the very significant word "tantalyze."

J. G. M.—The first bicycle was used in Paris in 1868. It was ridden by a Frenchman named Pierre Lallement, who afterwards went to America, and is, we believe, still alive. The name bicycle was first applied to it in 1867, in Paris. Before that time it has been called a "pedal velocipede," and in 1868, from the fact of its being given a brake on the rear wheel, it was called a "pedal and brake velocipede." The machine was introduced into America in 1868, and in 1869 made its first appearance in England. The general structure or character of the bicycle or "velocipede" of those early years was similar to the modern machine, but it has been improved by invention, and is now as near perfection as seems possible. There are single-wheeled machines or "monocycles" in existence, but it is not at all likely that they will be generally used, unless this and the following generations develop into a race of acrobats.

W.—Not to our knowledge.

M. T.—Treat the letter with silent contempt.

L. F. T.—The New York Chamber of Commerce was instituted in 1783.

C. L. D.—A crucible is a goldsmith's crucible or melting pot.

P. B.—1. To give linen a fine, smooth, glossy appearance, add a little spermaceti (a piece as large as a nutmeg) to the starch when boiling, and half a teaspoonful of the finest table-salt. 2. Apply to any officer of the railroad. 3. The average pay is not more than £2 per week.

C. R.—A varnish for paintings is made as follows:—Take six ounces of mastic, half an ounce of gum turpentine, two drams of camphor, and nineteen ounces of spirits of turpentine. Add first the camphor to the turpentine, and make the mixture in a water-bath. When the solution is effected, add the mastic and the spirits of turpentine near the end of the operation.

W. S.—1. Handel, Beethoven, Haydn, Mozart, Auber, Meyerbeer, Rossini, Balfe, Mendelssohn—all occupy the highest rank as musical composers, but we cannot say who is acknowledged as possessed of the greatest genius. 2. It looks to us like a trade-mark. 3. Your handwriting is fair, but it may be greatly improved by daily practice. Try to make it less stiff and cramped.

RESIDE THE SEA.

The lights were shining down the bay,
The shadows crept along the sands,
The silent town behind us lay
With darkened eyes and folded hands.

Far out beyond the harbour bar
The slender light-tower's sleepless eye
Gleaned like a brilliant diamond star
On the dim border of the sky.

The ocean lifted into sight
A full-orbed moon, and like a spell
O'er the dark bosom of the night,
A glowing mantle softly fell.

Hand linked in hand, we paced the shore,
Our hearts too full for sign or speech;
We heard the distant breakers' roar
Chime with the murmur of the beach.

That like some fierce, dread warning seemed,
This like a benediction fell,
That like some horror partly dreamed,
This like the music in a shell.

"For ever mine!" my heart's mad prayer
Throbbed into words—a passion flame.
"For ever thine!" across the air
A light-winged whisper soothing came.

Oh, life, how sweet! Oh, earth, how bright!
That whisper breathed of Heaven to me,
And shined for aye that glorious night
When we two walked beside the sea.

The days have rounded into years—
Tame, uneventful years to me.
I smile at youth's wild hopes and fears,
And walk no more beside the sea.

And ah, a wife and mother now,
Would scarcely deign to think of me,
Or e'en recall that whispered vow
And glorious night beside the sea.

W. S. A.

T. C.—To kill vermin, take one ounce of cocculus indicus and steep it in one gallon of water, wet the cattle or other animals thoroughly with the liquid, and the pests will soon disappear. It may also be successfully used to kill vermin on poultry, birds, etc., by dipping them into it, keeping their heads out, and soaking well.

P. M.—1. A pessimist is a universal complainer; one who is always looking on the dark side of things. 2. Mr. James O. Blaine was born on Jan. 31, 1830, in the Union Township, Washington County, Pennsylvania, U.S. He began his career as Professor of Mathematics in the Western Military Institute at Blue Licks Springs, Kentucky, but in a few years removed to Maine, and became connected with the daily press, first in Portland and then in Augusta, where he has ever since resided.

M. E. B.—In a case of paralysis, the first purpose should be to arouse the functions of the paralyzed limb; and this may be effected by the daily use of stimulating baths, moderate friction upon the surface of the skin, regular exercise, if possible, and the use of electricity. Special medicines may also be employed to stimulate the nerves and excite muscular contraction in the paralyzed part. There are various remedies which may be employed with success, provided they be prescribed by those professionally qualified to administer them. The appetite should be encouraged with a view of keeping up the strength of the patient, and for this purpose gentle tonics are recommended. While the diet should be nutritious, it should not be over-stimulating. Any excess is to be carefully avoided. Constipation should be guarded against, and attention paid to the condition of the kidneys. A physician of skill and experience would undoubtedly be of great service to you.

M.—The name is not in the directory.

R. C.—Yes, if he is your legal guardian.

C. T. N.—1. We advise you to defer your marriage for awhile. When your lover shall be able to provide as good a home as you now have, your mother may withdraw her objections. 2. "Victoria queen by the grace of God" is the translation of the sentence quoted.

S. D. G.—1. Coke is coal deprived of its bitumen, sulphur, or other extraneous or volatile matter by fire. It is sold by the coal-gas companies for fuel. 2. The St. Lawrence River is navigable for ships of the line of Quebec, and for vessels of 600 tons to Montreal. 3. A navigable passage through the whole length of the Red River's "great raft" was opened in November, 1873.

W. R.—1. The present King of Wurtemberg is Karl I. Year of birth, 1828; date of accession, June 28, 1864. 2. The Prince of Wurtemberg married the Princess Royal of England, daughter of George III., May 17, 1877. The elector assumed the title of king on Dec. 12, 1896, and was proclaimed on Jan. 1, 1900. 3. In the old German empire electors were certain princes who had the right of electing the emperor. 4. We would advise you to consult a lawyer on the subject of your query. A very nice legal point is involved in the case as you state it.

C. L. M.—The largest and tallest trees grow in California. The largest tree of the State is the sequoia gigantea, which grows to be thirty feet in diameter. Next to it is the redwood, which grows twenty feet thick. The sugar-pine, the red-fir, the yellow-fir, and the arbutus reach a diameter of ten feet, and all sometimes grow to be three hundred feet high. One mammoth tree is said to have attained the height of four hundred feet, and to have been forty feet in diameter.

R. B. C.—Since the abolition of the corn laws and duties upon grain in 1846, England has gradually become a free trade country, only twenty-four articles being charged with import duties, the chief being tobacco, spirits, tea, and wine. Formerly, the articles subject to duty numbered nearly a thousand. No protective duties are now levied on goods imported, customs duties being charged solely for the sake of revenue.

G. T. P.—1. We do not undertake to give opinions as to the solvency of any business firm. 2. Pure cane sugar boiled in a solution of caustic potash remains colourless, but if starch sugar be present the liquid turns brown. A filtered solution of thirty-three grains of cane or beet sugar in one ounce of water, mixed with three grains of pure caustic potash, and then agitated with one and a half grains of sulphate of copper in a close vessel remains clear, even after the lapse of several days; but if starch sugar be present, a red precipitate is formed after some time, and if present in considerable quantity the copper will be wholly converted into oxide within twenty-four hours; the solution first turns blue or green, and then entirely loses its colour. Of pure molasses sugar has been largely adulterated with the waste liquor (solution of glycerine) of the steam-manufactories; but this fraud may be detected by its inferior sweetness, and by its dirty appearance.

C. R. D.—1. Patagonia is at the extreme southern portion of the continent of South America, extending from the Rio Negro to the Strait of Magellan. It is bounded on the east by the Atlantic Ocean; on the north by the Argentine Republic (La Plata), from which it is separated by the Rio Negro; on the west by the Pacific Ocean, and on the south by the Strait of Magellan, which separates the mainland from Terra del Fuego and the adjacent islands. Its greatest length is 1,015 miles; greatest breadth, 295 miles. The Andes are continuous from Chile throughout Patagonia, gradually declining in height as they approach the Strait of Magellan, where they are not more than from 5,000 to 4,000 feet in elevation (which is here the limit of perpetual snow). The country comprises two distinct regions, differing in surface and climate, the one lying on the west side of the Andes, the other on the east, and called respectively East and West Patagonia. The latter is in direct contrast to the East country. It is wholly a mountain region, and the climate disagreeable as to render it almost uninhabitable. East Patagonia is a succession of horizontal plains, called pampas, which rise to higher and higher levels. The climate is very cold in winter, and hot in summer, the transition from the extremes of temperature being remarkably rapid. Vegetation is very rare, but fish abound on the coast.

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